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Hafa Adai!

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# Saipan Tribune

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FERDIE DE LA TORRE
Dave Burger, a managing partner for auditing firm Burger Comer Magliari, conducts a virtual presentation about their audit on the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. for 2021 before members of the CUC board last week.

**AUDIT SAYS:**

## CUC power revenue from commercial customers down from $16.2M to $12M

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

An independent audit conducted on the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. shows that its power revenue from commercial customers went down by $4 million in 2021—from $16.2 million in 2020 to $12 million a year later.

### » CUC's assets and deferred outflows of resources increased by $20M

In his presentation to the CUC board meeting last week, Dave Burger, managing partner of Burger Comer Magliari, said one of the things they considered in the audit his company did on CUC for the 2021 period was that the CNMI

*See CUC on Page 4*

## $6M grant to repair 21 old gov't buildings is extended for a year

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Rabauliman

The $6-million grant awarded to the Historic Preservation Office three years ago so it could repair and renovate some old government buildings on Saipan has just been extended, according to acting Department of Community and Cultural Affairs Secretary Francisco M. Rabauliman.

Rabauliman disclosed Friday that when he became acting DCCA secretary last August, a couple of things

*See $6M on Page 4*

## Ayuyu: We need Chinese tourists

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

Commonwealth Ports Authority board chair Jose "Joe" Ayuyu concedes the CNMI needs to perform a delicate balancing act of getting the China market to return, while also considering the government's expressed stance of not relying too much on that particular market.

When asked about his stance on the previous CPA leadership's efforts to bring back the market through a CNMI exemption from the U.S Department of Transportation's China Order Part 213, Ayuyu agrees that the CNMI needs its Chinese

*See AYUYU on Page 4*

## Downward trend in gas prices continues

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
Local oil companies have reduced gas prices again by 10 cents with Mobil Oil Marianas taking the lead late yesterday.

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

The CNMI continues to see a downward trend in gas prices with another 10-cent decrease implemented yesterday.

Late yesterday afternoon, Mobil Oil Marianas took the

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Four Northern Marianas College nursing assistant graduates have passed the National Nurse Aide Assessment Program Competency Exams.
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### WORLD
A barrage of Israeli airstrikes leveled apartment buildings in a refugee camp near Gaza City on Tuesday.
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# Local

## Chamber elects four board members

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
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CORRESPONDENT

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce elected four board members during their monthly membership meeting yesterday at the Hyatt Regency in Garapan, with all four serving two-year terms.

After all votes were turned in, three of the six candidates were re-elected to their posts: Joshua Wise of PHI Pharmacy, IT&E's Velma Palacios, and TanHoldings Corp.'s Alex Sablan, The fourth is newly elected Brad Ruszala of Triple J.

Chamber board of directors president Joseph Guerrero welcomed newly elected Ruszala, and the returning members and later told Saipan Tribune, "We're excited. We have a lot of work in front of us and the board has a lot of important issues, policy issues, that we're looking to be a part of. …We welcome them and thank them for their service. …This is all volunteer work and we're doing it for our community, [not just for] our business community, but our entire community, our CNMI community."

He also thanked outgoing board member Nicole Babauta (Docomo Pacific), who decided not to return to the board. Ruszala will be filling in Babauta's place.

Later, Ruszala said it's exciting to become a part of the Chamber board. "I get to work with great people. … And I get to work with some really well-established professionals and get to see how we can do better things for our local economy."

Returning board members also expressed gratitude for being re-elected.

"I love being on the board [and] working with all these awesome people. They volunteer their time just to work on bettering the CNMI economy and just advocating for our businesses and the community at large so I just want to continue working on that," Palacios said.

Wise said, "We have a lot of items on our agenda, but we'll our best in mitigating these challenging times and I'm proud to serve again to support those efforts. We have plans to meet with the Legislature to go over our position with [the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands], so we can find a way to move forward amicably with the administration."

Sablan, who represents Century Insurance and TanHoldings Corp., said, "I look forward to working with my fellow board members and colleagues within the Saipan Chamber of Commerce on initiatives that'll improve our economic outlook and the CNMI community as a whole. I also thank the Chamber members for their vote of confidence."

CHRYSTAL MARINO

Saipan Chamber of Commerce board of directors president Joseph Guerrero and secretaries Ron Smith and Donna Krum pose alongside returning board of directors Joshua Wise and Velma Palacios, third and fourth from right, and newly elected board member Brad Ruszala, second from left.

## New law enhances MVA's promotional abilities

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios has signed into law a Senate bill that is intended to enhance the Marianas Visitors Authority's ability to attract tourists to visit the CNMI.

Senate Bill 23-02, House Substitute 1, is now Public Law 23-10. The bill expands the MVA's duties so that it could qualify for available grants without permanently shifting authorities and duties.

The legislation empowers MVA with enhanced promoting capabilities and the ability to tap into sources of funds that otherwise would not be available to it if its duties are not expanded.

Under the new law, MVA's duties include planning, designing, and proposing projects and programs to enhance the CNMI as a tourist destination on properties not located within 150 feet from high water, without the expressed approval of the Department of Public Lands.

MVA may sponsor events and issue grants for construction projects and programs to increase visitors' satisfaction, but shall not generate revenue from such events, construction projects, and programs.

Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) introduced the bill last Jan. 10. The Senate unanimously passed it last April 20.

The House of Representatives Commerce and Tourism Committee inserted some changes to the bill by including a sunset provision, among other things. The House subsequently passed the bill last Sept. 7. The Senate then accepted the House's amendments.

# Music for the heart: A fundraiser of hope

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
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CORRESPONDENT

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Amber Mendiola-Romolor poses with her family.

It's a story of perseverance, hope, and family love—all displayed through music this Saturday at the Garapan Central Park—as family members and friends of singer Amber Mendiola-Romolor gather to host the "Music for the Heart" benefit concert for her, and they're inviting the community to join them.

The singer of hit songs Isa Lei, My Baby Boy and Set Me Free, Mendiola-Romolor, was born with Tetralogy of Fallot, a congenital heart defect that combines four complex heart abnormalities. Medical specialists told her parents she wouldn't live past 18 and that she would never have kids.

She now has a healthy son and is 33, but her remarkable triumphs also came at a cost. Throughout her life, Mendiola-Romolor has had five open-heart surgeries and four minor surgeries. She was recently told that she would need another open-heart surgery in California before February.

To fundraise for her medical referral, Mendiola-Romolor's family is hosting the benefit concert on Nov. 4, 2023 at Garapan Central Park from 6pm to 11pm, with the aim of raising funds for the medical costs, flights and lodging.

Mendiola-Romolor said she feels quite touched that her family are coming together to hold an event like this, and she knew times are tough on the community, and to get medical referral money is a struggle in its own.

"Unfortunately, with how the medical referral system is right now I will definitely need to do the fundraisings to basically live, travel, and go there on my own. That's what it's kind of come down to," she said.

Mendiola-Romolor was initially opposed to doing any type of medical fundraiser. "That was really just because I know that the community is suffering a lot, the economy is not the greatest…[and] people are going through different things, but once we actually sat down and really went through what's needed, it was very clear that I will need to have some sort of fundraiser," she added.

She said her family suggested a benefit concert. After all, coming from a long line of musicians, that was their niche, Mendiola-Romolor said. Her grandfather was actually one of the original members of a band called TropicSette. Her mother was also a singer in a band, while her father was a lead guitarist, and now she and her siblings a are different forms of artists—mainly musical.

"When my family and I were talking about it, we were thinking…[of]…doing a fundraiser [that] also gives back to the community and one of the things that came up was doing a concert because that's our thing. Our family is all about music. So, when we decided okay, we're going to do a family concert featuring our family, but we [also] wanted to include other bands," she said.

Other bands, musicians, and vocalists such as Sugar King Band, Los Lobos, Kings and Dreamers, Ace Elameto, Big Jay, and TatzSelepeo will be joining them for the concert.

Mendiola-Romolor said this would be the first time in years she would sing in a concert again, and that it was special because she would not only sing with her family, but with her children as well.

"It's going to be beautiful because…the bands are family. Some of them are family within the band. Some of them are my family but they have their own band and so this is a family event as well and we're really excited about it," she said.

Some of the numbers she and her family will be playing are songs from the original TropicSette band. "We're also going to be playing songs from my album. When I was a teenager, I actually was a part of the Make-A-Wish Foundation, and my wish was to do an album. And so, I went and did an album in Guam and showcased it here in the CNMI and a lot of people loved the music. This is the first time I'm going to be playing the music again in such a long time. It's been years since I've played my own music and so I'm going to be bringing that back to the stage again."

Yes, the concert is a fundraiser for her medical referral, but Mendiola-Romolor sees it as more than that and she hopes to give back to the community.

"We are seeing that it's gaining a lot of traction. A lot of people are very interested in coming out for the cause because I'm also treating it as something bigger than me. Yes, it is to fundraise for my medical referral but at the same time it's also to bring people together," she said.

As a build-up toward the event Mendiola-Romolor has been posting promotional videos of her and her siblings singing several music covers.

This early, Mendiola-Romolor is already grateful to the community. "Our community is so wonderful. And for someone who was born with a heart condition, this is the only thing I've ever known all of my life. I didn't have a normal childhood because I was always in and out of hospitals, I even thought that the hospital was my home. I couldn't play with other kids, and finally being an adult and being told 'Oh you need to go for another heart surgery' was really scary. But this community has been so supportive; have been giving prayers, and love, and just support in all different kinds of ways. And I just want to thank the community for all they're doing. And so, I just want to thank the community and praise the community for being so amazing," she said. "Somebody once told me that the CNMI, regardless of our diverse cultures, is built on love and I'm definitely feeling that now. It's kind of overwhelming actually."

Romolor also thanks her main sponsors, KKMP and Turnkey Solutions, for all their support and help.

Concert doors open at 5:30pm, and performances start at 6pm until 11pm.

Tickets are $25 and children under 7 are free. To purchase tickets, contact Mendiola-Romolor through Facebook or email 670amberfundraiser@gmail.com. Donations can also be made on her website https://www.ambermendiolaromolor.com/.

# JGO: High court ruling is 2nd dismissal of Torres' suit vs. JGO

The CNMI Supreme Court dismissed former governor Ralph DLG Torres' appeal on Oct. 31, 2023, due to mootness. This upholds the prior victory of the House of Representatives' Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations in the Superior Court.

Torres

This marks the second dismissal in succession of a lawsuit by Torres where the JGO, with pro bono representation from the Legislative Bureau's legal team, successfully invoked legislative immunity against Torres and his attorneys, encompassing local counsel, the Office of the Governor, and his private DC-based lawyers.

The CNMI Superior Court's ruling, which states a sitting governor is subject to legislative subpoena, remains unchallenged.

"The dismissal reinforces that a CNMI governor is bound by legislative subpoena and that the JGO committee possesses legislative immunity. Though we won this in the Superior Court, we hoped the Supreme Court would further clarify these points," said former representative Tina Sablan, who is one of Torres' most vocal critic.

Despite the JGO's continued success against Torres, there's disappointment about the case's dismissal on procedural grounds. Former JGO chairwoman, Sen. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan), said, "While the Superior Court's decision remains, it's disheartening that the Supreme Court missed a chance to interpret the law."

Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan), who is a former JGO member, added, "We hoped the Supreme Court would address the former governor's unfounded claims about his purported legal immunity. The dismissal, to me, suggests the court wasn't convinced by his arguments."

The 22nd House Standing Committee on Judiciary and Government Operations was represented by counsel Brendan Layde and Joseph LG. Taijeron Jr. Torres' legal team included Joseph E. Horey, Richard C. Miller, Gilbert J. Birnbrich, and Ross H. Garber. ***(PR)***

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DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

# Court releases IPI's liquor vault key to Clear Management

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

The District Court for the NMI, pursuant to Joshua Gray's request, has released Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC's liquor vault key to court appointed receiver Clear Management Ltd to carry out receivership.

Last Oct. 31, Gray made a motion requesting that the District Court provide the key to IPI's liquor vault to Clear Management to carry out receivership on IPI's personal property. This personal property includes the liquor that is being stored in IPI's liquor vault in the basement of the casino.

District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona Manglona has since granted this request and has ordered that the vault key be released to Clear Management.

"Because the court finds that Clear needs the key in order to carry out its duties under the order, Gray's motion is hereby granted. Accordingly, Clear shall retrieve the key from the court by contacting the Clerk's Office and shall retain possession of that key until the liquidation of IPI's liquor is complete or otherwise ordered by the Court," said Manglona in her order.

Gray is a former IPI employee who sued the casino investor over discrimination claims. He was granted a writ of execution back in August that allows him to seize and sell IPI properties to satisfy his $5,686,182 judgment. However, he asked the court last month to grant him a limited receivership instead.

Last Oct. 23, the court issued an order appointing Clear Management as Limited Receiver for the Sale of IPI's personal property that directs Clear to liquidate the personal property subject to Gray's writ of execution that was executed by the U.S. Marshals.

Manglona stated that the limited receiver shall have the option to sell any of IPI's personal property itself or to contract with third-parties or specialists to sell any of IPI's personal property, such as the liquor or art belonging to IPI, without further approval by the court.

Clear Management will also be paid an 18% commission on the sale of IPI properties, and the limited receiver shall decide how that sum is split with any contractors.

Last May, Manglona ruled in favor of Gray in his discrimination suit against IPI and awarded him compensatory damages of $121,545.55 in back pay, $300,000 in lost future earnings, and $1 million in emotional distress damages.

Manglona also granted Gray punitive damages at a ratio of 3:1 of punitive damages to compensatory damages, totaling $4,264,636.65.

Gray initially requested $3,939,768 in compensatory damages with a ratio of 7:1 for punitive damages, which amount to $31,518,144 in total damages.

## AYUYU

*From page 1*

tourists to return, but CPA must also be in sync with the administration when it comes to this issue.

"We do need the Chinese tourists to return to Saipan but we have to work with the Office of the Governor and make sure that we're in sync with the administration because, after all, the governor is the head our islands and we have to work with him," he said.

The CNMI used to rely on three source markets for its tourists: South Korea, Japan, and China. Right now, it's down to just two: South Korea and Japan, and tourism numbers have not recovered yet to pre-pandemic levels.

Ayuyu, who was recently elected CPA board chair, has inherited several challenges beyond the autonomous agency's control, one of them being the absence of the China market.

Having just joined the CPA board, Ayuyu said he wants to work with Gov. Arnold I. Palacios to see what they can do as leaders to help the islands. "Of course, there are still some issues that have to be addressed when it comes to China but I think we can work it out," he said.

Ayuyu added that the CNMI also should welcome other markets aside from China.

"We welcome all tourists from different parts of the world. It is good for us," he said.

During former CPA chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds' tenure, CPA sought to obtain an exemption from USDOT's China Order Part 213 which essentially caps the number of China flights to the entire United States to just 24 flights a month.

King-Hinds previously explained that Chinese tourist have been traveling to the CNMI on scheduled charter flights, which means they are subject to the limitations imposed by U.S. DOT's China Part Order 213. This is why CPA is seeking an exemption.

"The challenge is that everybody assumes that all these China flights are regular charter flights. However, what they really are scheduled charter flights. Meaning, they are scheduled flights that tour companies buy seats from. They don't buy all the seats, they buy a certain percentage of seats from these scheduled flights. These are seats that they guarantee will be paid for. To that extent, these tour companies are chartering but it is still a scheduled flight that they're buying a bunch of seats from. So, it's not technically a charter because they aren't chartering the whole flight; they're just buying a large number of seats. Hence the need for the exemption to remove the barrier so that these flights can come back. Because they are scheduled flights, they are not exempted from the limitations," she said.

King-Hinds explained that if not given the exemption, the CNMI would have to compete with destinations like Los Angeles and New York City for Chinese tourists as the U.S. DOT order only allows 24 flights from China to the entire United States a month.

**A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com**

## $6M

*From page 1*

grabbed his attention, one of which is the $6-million historic renovation disaster grant from the U.S. National Park Service.

He learned that they only had until Sept. 30, 2023, to use up the $6 million because the projects weren't moving and they needed to engage with contactors.

Rabauliman believes former DCCA secretary Mary Margaret Sablan actually did a lot of work to try to get the grantor to consider giving them an extension.

One of the biggest conditions the grantor required was that there has to be substantial progress in the projects in order to grant an extension. That means a contract has to be already in place to renovate 21 old government buildings on Capital Hill.

He said they have a listing of the scope of work and all the necessary repair work that need to be done on the buildings that they submitted to the grantor for the construction and repair work to move forward.

Upon seeing that, Rabauliman said, the U.S. National Park Service determined it's enough to at least grant HPO an extension.

"They gave us a one-year extension for the project," he said.

Rabauliman said they need to get all the scope of work and all the necessary paperwork through procurement, which they did three weeks ago.

"I must say there was a lot of work that were already done when I got on board. I just moved it forward to Procurement," he said.

Right now, with all the bids for the projects, he said they are working on getting a panelist to review them so that they can come up with a recommendation on the winning bidder.

He noted that there are restrictions on the kind of work that can be done on the buildings: for one, they cannot modify the structure because that's the whole idea of preservation.

Rabauliman said some of scope of work involve replacing windows, doors, and flooring.

He is looking at anywhere between six months to a year to complete the first phase of the project—which is to repair and renovate 21 buildings.

He believes there is room for a second phase—repair and renovation of additional buildings.

Rabauliman said these old buildings are not only on Capital Hill, but in different parts of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

He said many of the 21 buildings, which were built during the U.S. Naval Administration in the late '50s, don't require excavation, but need interior work.

## GAS

*From page 1*

lead in implementing the most recent 10-cent reduction in gas prices. Shell Marianas is expected to follow suit today.

With the most recent reduction, Mobil now charges $5.36 per gallon of its Extra fuel from $5.46. Mobil also reduced its Supreme fuel from $5.91 per gallon to $5.81 while diesel went down from $6.08 per gallon to $5.98.

Since the end of September, fuel prices have only continued to drop.

Over two weeks ago, oil companies dropped their prices from $5.56 per gallon of regular fuel to $5.46.

Less than a week prior, oil companies dropped fuel prices from $5.66 per gallon to $5.56.

Prior to that, late in September oil companies dropped regular fuel prices from $5.76 per gallon to $5.66.

The down trend in fuel prices came after a string of increases in the last few months.

The first increase was seen back on July 19, after more than two months of steady fuel prices, Mobil Oil Marianas broke the streak with a 15-cent increase.

With the increase, regular fuel went up from $5.11 per gallon to $5.26 per gallon.

Less than a week after, on July 25, Shell Marianas surprised the CNMI community when it took the lead in implementing a 10-cent increase that brought regular fuel prices up from $5.26 per gallon to $5.36.

Again, less than a week after, on Aug. 2, gas went up 15 cents. With the previous increase, fuel went up from $5.36 per gallon to $5.51.

Following the Aug. 2 increase, local oil companies raised their prices again in a little over two weeks by 5 cents with fuel increasing from $5.51 per gallon to $5.56.

After over a week, local oil companies raised its prices again by 10 cents, with gas prices rising from $5.56 per gallon to $5.66.

Soon after, local oil companies raised their prices again by 10 cents, bringing regular fuel up from $5.66 to $5.76 per gallon.

## CUC

*From page 1*

probably had six months of regular operations in 2020 and six months of COVID-19 pandemic.

For 2021, there were 12 months of COVID-19, said Burger.

That means they already expected to see a decreased revenue for CUC's commercial accounts, he said.

At the time, Burger said, hotels were operating up until March 2020 and not much at all in 2021.

He said their firm is doing the numbers for the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands, which enabled them to determine that hotel occupancy last September was at only 41%.

"Hotels are not making any money at year-to-date," said Burger, adding that the best month was 53% and only three hotels were getting over 60% occupancy.

He said this was indirectly applicable to CUC because it generates revenue from the power consumption of hotels.

The 2021 audit has three reports: the financial statements themselves, internal controls and compliance with government auditing standards, and internal control and compliance for each major program.

Burger said they have a qualified opinion on the audit report on the financial statements themselves. That is simply because they were not hired on or before Sept. 30, 2021 to do the audit and, as such, could not be there to observe the physical inventory on that date.

He said it's a routine qualification anytime the auditor is not engaged before the end of the fiscal year being audited.

"I hope that doesn't create problems with federal agencies. I'm dealing with it on other clients and really it is routine," Burger said.

On the internal control and compliance report, he said they did have one finding.

On the third report—compliance for each major program—Burger said they did have one finding on federal programs as it relates to reporting.

He said there are periodic reports required to be submitted to the grantor and, in this case, the reports were late.

Burger said the CUC management has provided them with a corrective action plan.

"I don't think there's any disagreement with the finding. It did happen," he pointed out.

In comparing the 2021 figures to the 2020, Burger said there was an increase in total assets and deferred outflows of resources of about $20 million.

Burger said about $14 million of that is an increase in cash, and then there was construction and progress that went up by about $8 million.

"And that kind of explains the increase in assets," he said.

As for total liabilities, Burger said there wasn't really any change: from $46.3 million to $46.9 million.

Burger said there was a significant decrease in an obligation under environmental remediation costs at $8 million.

He said net position went up by $20 million, which is pretty much the same as the total assets and deferred outflows.

On the income statement, the net operating revenues went from $82 million in 2020 down to $68 million in 2021.

Over that last 10 years, he said, CUC has had four years of sharp decreases in revenue for different reasons.

Burger said net operating revenues dropped quite a bit, creating an operating loss.

He said, however, the remediation helped out, recovery of bad debts helped out quite a bit, and capital contributions were tremendous, during which construction and progress happened.

"So net position, which is the equity of CUC, actually went up by $20 million in 2021," he said.

As to why the audit covers only the 2021 period, Burger said one of the three auditing firms operating in Micronesia decided to leave the market last March, so there were some jobs that were left undone or not even started.

"That's why this audit is coming out at this time. … It's been a bit overwhelming. We're just inundated with requests for work," he added.

# More NMC nursing assistant graduates pass NNAAP exam

Northern Marianas College nursing assistant graduates Lerica Primo, Karena Torres, Cindy Yang, and Antoinnette Hernaez have added their names to the growing list of successful NMC graduates who have passed the National Nurse Aide Assessment Program Competency Exam, becoming certified nursing assistants.

The NNAAP exam is an industry certification developed by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing to assess competency in nurse aide skills. To prepare for the NNAAP, the four students underwent a rigorous 10-week nursing assistant training course hosted by the college's Nursing Department last summer 2022.

NMC Nursing Department chair Rosa Aldan congratulated the four on their achievements. "We are extremely proud of our graduates who are certified nursing assistants and are excited for them to start their careers as certified nursing assistants," she said.

Lerica Primo, a current NMC Pre-Nursing student, chose the nursing profession out of a desire to care for others. "I am aware that the job can be demanding, but I have personally witnessed the positive impact CNAs can have on their patients' lives. I've always had a passion for helping others and want to make a difference by caring for those who are incapable of caring for themselves. I also sought to gain as much experience as possible to boost my confidence and strengthen my abilities in preparation for the nursing program," she said.

NMC

From left, Northern Marianas College nursing assistant graduates Antoinnette Hernaez, Cindy Yang, Karena Torres, and Lerica Primo recently passed the National Nurse Aide Assessment Program Competency Exam.

According to Primo, her children serve as her greatest inspiration. She is now working at Marianas Health Services as a CNA.

Karena Torres entered the medical field with the goal of making a meaningful impact in people's lives through healthcare. Torres said, "I've always been drawn to the healthcare field and felt that becoming a certified nursing assistant would be a great way to start my career. The program at NMC had an excellent reputation for providing comprehensive training and support, which further motivated me to choose it as my educational path."

Torres described her experience in the NMC CNA program as incredibly rewarding. She gained not only essential clinical skills but also learned the importance of compassion, empathy, and effective communication in providing high-quality care to patients. Torres plans to work in a healthcare facility on Saipan and continue her education in Occupational Therapy.

Torres has applied at the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. to work as a certified nursing assistant.

Cindy Yang enrolled in NMC's summer 2022 CNA program with the passion of joining the healthcare sector and aspirations of becoming a registered nurse in the future. "This programexceeded my expectations and had a reputation for providing complete training and support, reinforcing my desire to become a nurse to serve more people on this island," Yang said.

She found the NNAAP exam challenging but worthwhile.

Yang has applied at CHCC to work as a certified nursing assistant.

From a young age, Antoinnette Hernaez knew she wanted to work in the medical field, and the CNA program served as an important stepping stone toward achieving her goal. "Being a CNA is a great opportunity for me to be part of people's lives, especially when they need someone to care for them the most," she said.

Influenced by a close friend, Hernaez enrolled in NMC's summer 2022 CNA program, leading her to learn more about CNAs. After researching the profession and its responsibilities, she decided that it was the right path for her. Hernaez is now eager to apply her skills, abilities, and knowledge by working in a healthcare center.

Hernaez has applied at CHCC to work as a certified nursing assistant.

For more information about NMC's CNA program, email Aldan at rosa.aldan@marianas.edu or call (670) 237-6744. ***(NMC)***

## EARTHQUAKE BRIEFS

### 4.9-magnitude earthquake near NMI

At 6:26am on Nov. 1, 2023, a report of a 4.9-magnitude earthquake occurred near the Mariana Islands Region. Currently, there are no reports of injuries or damages and no tsunami warnings or advisories were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center.

For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 237-8000. ***(PR)***

### 5.1-magnitude earthquake near Yap

At 11:25am on Oct. 31, 2023, a report of a 5.1-magnitude earthquake occurred at in near the State of Yap Federated States of Micronesia. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center.

For more information, please contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at (670) 237-8000. ***(PR)***

Regenerative Agriculture
WORKSHOP SERIES
Learn how to grow your own food!
Saturday Nov. 04
Saipan
Family Food Forest & Commercial Agroforestry Workshop - NMC Campus, Room K-1, 8:00AM - 4:30PM
Saturday Nov. 11
Saipan
Installation - CREES As Perdido Research Station , 6:30am - 2:30pm
Wednesday Nov. 08
Rota
Family Food Forest & Commercial Agroforestry Workshop - NMC Campus, Rota 8:00AM - 4:30PM
Thursday Nov. 09
Rota
Hands-On/ Installation
Mr. Ambrosio's (Ambi) plot Gampapa, 6:30am - 2:30pm
(Map will be provided in Day 1 workshop)
Monday Nov. 13
Tinian
Family Food Forest & Silvopasture/Commercial Agroforestry Workshop
NMC Campus, Tinian 8:00AM - 4:30PM
Tuesday Nov. 14
Tinian
Installation
CREES San Jose Research Station, 6:30am - 2:30pm
For more information about the Regenerative Ag Workshop, please contact Jesse Deleon Guerrero at (670)237-6876 or email jesse.dlguerrero@marianas.edu
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# China's declining aid to Pacific islands increasingly goes to allies, think tank reports

By ROD McGUIRK
Associated Press
Associate Editor

AP

Chinese President Xi Jinping talks to Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands Manasseh Sogavare, not pictured, during their meeting at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing, Wednesday, Oct. 9, 2019.

**CANBERRA, Australia** (AP)—China's declining aid to the South Pacific is increasingly targeted toward its political allies in the region as appetite there for Chinese credit declines and competition grows with the U.S. for influence, an independent Australian think tank reported Tuesday.

Chinese overall economic influence among the 14 aid-dependent island nations in the region is losing ground because of better loan deals being offered by U.S. allies, especially Australia, the Sydney-based Lowy Institute said in its annual analysis of aid to the region.

Focus on the strategic competition in the South Pacific has heightened since China struck a security pact with the Solomon Islands last year that raised the prospect of a Chinese naval foothold in the region.

China has increased aid to the Solomons and neighboring Kiribati since they switched diplomatic allegiances to Beijing from self-ruled Taiwan in 2019, the report said.

The United States has sought to counter Chinese influence in the region with additional diplomatic and economic engagement. President Joe Biden recently hosted Pacific Island leaders at the White House.

China's overall aid to the island states in 2021 – the latest year for which the international policy think tank has comprehensive data — was $241 million. The year continued a downward trend in Chinese grants and loans to some of the world's most aid-dependent countries since China's $384 million peak in 2016, the institute reported.

The latest report revises previous Chinese annual contributions based on additional data but maintains the downward trend.

"It reflects a strategic shift to reduce risk, cement political ties and enhance capital returns," the report said.

China's $3.9 billion aid to the Pacific since 2008 was primarily directed to countries with official diplomatic ties to Beijing: These include Cook Islands, Fiji, Micronesia, Niue, Papua New Guinea and Samoa.

"Because China only provides ODF (official development finance) to a subset of Pacific countries, it can play an outsized role in these countries that belies its moderate role share of total regional financing," the report said.

China was only the third-biggest aid contributor to Pacific after Australia, which provides 40%, then the Asian Development Bank, the report said. China's contribution since 2008 has been 9%.

The decline in Chinese aid has been driven mainly by a lack of Pacific government interest in Chinese loans that have left Pacific countries including Tonga heavily in debt. The United States has warned that Chinese finance is a debt trap for poor countries that threatens their sovereignty.

"What is very clear is that the interest from Pacific governments in Chinese loans, specifically infrastructure loans, has declined," Lowy researcher Riley Duke said. "It's just being outcompeted."

China held a third share of the infrastructure investment in the Pacific market two decades ago, but that proportion had since halved, the report said.

AT UNITED NATIONS FORUM

# Asian, Pacific gov'ts eye new ways of assessing public debt sustainability

ESCAP
THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE
ON MACROECONOMIC POLICY, POVERTY REDUCTION AND FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT
#CMPF4
1 to 3 November 2023

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Asian and Pacific governments meeting at the UN Forum seek to balance debt vulnerability concerns with additional investments in sustainable development, climate action.

Governments meeting this week at a United Nations forum are considering new ways of assessing public debt sustainability and scaling up sustainable finance against a backdrop of the need to increase investments in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and stronger climate action, and at a time when public coffers remain hemmed in by recent multiple crises.

Dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, fallout from the war in Ukraine and other global turbulences over the last several years have left many governments in Asia and the Pacific short on public funds to meet their commitments on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is at its midway point this year.

Therefore, identifying long-term financing solutions to get the Goals back on track and incorporating SDG investment requirements while assessing debt risks will be the main discussion point at the fourth session of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development.

"The imperative for the significant needed additional investments in SDGs is colored by an increasing number of countries experiencing rising debt distress. In this environment, a key policy challenge is how to accelerate investments in SDGs while maintaining public debt sustainability in the long term," said Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

"In our new financing for development report, Sustainable Finance: Bridging the Gap in Asia and the Pacific, we lay out ten principles for action to close the gap in sustainable finance, and discuss in detail what governments, regulators and private finance entities can do to scale-up sustainable finance and how to increase its affordability and accessibility," she added.

In his opening remarks, the State Minister of Finance of Sri Lanka, Shehan Semasinghe said: "As physical deficits have become common in both developed and developing countries, borrowing for budget finance needs to be looked at in a new light. Indeed, a new approach is necessary in particular to circumvent the present approach's undue favoritism of short-term public debt sustainability at the expense of long-term economic and social development."

According to the latest estimates of the G20 Independent Expert Group, the global annual incremental investments needed by developing countries (excluding China) for SDGs and climate action are around $3 trillion, with about two-thirds expected to come from domestic resource mobilization and local finance. External financing commitments are expected to contribute the remaining $1 trillion, split evenly between both official development financing and private capital.

In response, the United Nations Secretary-General has launched the 'SDG Stimulus to deliver the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', which aims to tackle the high cost of debt, scale up long-term financing for development and expand contingency financing to countries in need.

Competing pressures, however, have resulted in ballooning debt for many regional economies, with the public debt-to-GDP ratio reaching an 18-year high by 2021 and exposing an increasing number of countries to the risk of debt distress. ESCAP contends that a high level of public debt is not necessarily bad; what matters is how it is used. Its analysis recommends adopting a long-term approach to assess the risk of debt distress and shows that debt levels can indeed go down if the socio-economic and environmental gains of investments in SDGs are taken into account.

The committee is scheduled to deliberate on debt sustainability and sustainable finance issues and hear from the experience of participants to increase understanding of the need for, and the policy implications of, a long-term public debt sustainability analysis that takes into consideration investments in the SDGs and climate action.

The committee will also review the 10 broad principles underpinning the actions to be undertaken by governments, regulators and private finance entities to scale up sustainable finance in Asia and the Pacific. These ten principles are guiding ideas that are in line with the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda to support financing for the SDGs and climate action, rather than binding commitments by member States. ***(PR)***

# USCGC *Oliver Henry* concludes 28-day patrol in Blue Pacific

**SANTA RITA, Guam—**The USCGC *Oliver Henry* (WPC 1140) crew returned to homeport on Oct. 15 after a 28-day patrol that reinforced the U.S. commitment to sovereignty and resource security in the Federated States of Micronesia Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and beyond.

The mission, which was part of Operation Rematau and the broader U.S. Coast Guard's Operation Blue Pacific, fortifies the U.S. reputation as a reliable, trusted partner in the region.

Sovereignty and resource security are fundamental components of national and regional stability. Access to vital goods, particularly in remote island nations, hinges on the maritime domains' secure and lawful use. During the patrol, the *Oliver Henry* crew dedicated 11 days in the FSM's EEZ and two days on the high seas, logging 422 total operational hours and sailing 4,986 nautical miles. The team's presence and surveillance capabilities bolstered maritime domain awareness and effectively upheld regional sovereignty.

"This mission represents another pivotal chapter in the ongoing success story of Operation Rematau and the U.S. Coast Guard's contribution to a free and open Blue Pacific. We continue to prove that our Service is not just a force for good but a dependable and committed partner in this strategic region's long-term security and prosperity," said Capt. Nick Simmons, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam, reflecting on the broader objectives.

The crew conducted three observation reports on Chinese-Taipei, Korean, and Japanese-flagged fishing vessels within the FSM EEZ and on the high seas, thus contributing to regional stability and resource protection.

Additionally, the crew delivered new school supplies to communities on two FSM atolls and facilitated the return of the Nukuoro Elementary School principal. The mission ensured the delivery of over 6,000 pounds of supplies to Chuuk and Yap. The supplies include goods from UNICEF like 39 Schools-in-a-Box, 31 Early Childhood Development, and two Recreation Kits so children can play and learn even during emergencies.

Further enhancing partnerships, the crew hosted the U.S. Ambassador to FSM, Jennifer Johnson and newly arrived Foreign Service Officer Amy Gradin in Phonpei. They toured the ship and discussed the invaluable role the U.S. Coast Guard plays in search and rescue and deterrence of illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing in FSM territorial waters and in the region. The Oliver Henry crew also took embassy personnel underway for area familiarization and atoll surveys.

A unique part of these patrols is the human connection. Lt. Ray Cerrato, the commanding officer of Oliver Henry, emphasized this, stating, "The relationships we've built and the lives we've touched will last a lifetime. From delivering school supplies to sharing best practices with agency partners, these interactions go beyond mere duty; they embody the human spirit of cooperation and mutual respect."

» Patrol strengthened sovereignty and resource security

USCG

The USCGC *Oliver Henry* (WPC 1140) crew hold a cutterman ceremony for Petty Officer 2nd Class Max Bartlett while in the Philippine Sea on Oct. 9. 2023. The team returned to homeport on Oct. 15 after a 28-day patrol that reinforced the U.S. commitment to sovereignty and resource security in the Federated States of Micronesia Exclusive Economic Zone and beyond. The mission, which was part of Operation Rematau and the broader U.S. Coast Guard's Operation Blue Pacific, fortifies the U.S. reputation as a reliable, trusted partner in the region.

USCG

The USCGC *Oliver Henry* (WPC 1140) crew deliver supplies and the principal to Nukuoro, an atoll in the Federated States of Micronesia, on Sept. 24, 2023.

USCG

Petty Officer 2nd Class Breandan Muldowney stand with a Federated States of Micronesia National Police officer with USCGC *Oliver Henry* (WPC 1140) in the background as the crew deliver supplies and the principal to Nukuoro, an atoll in the Federated States of Micronesia on Sept. 24, 2023.

USCG

The USCGC *Oliver Henry* (WPC 1140) crew deliver supplies and the principal to Nukuoro, an atoll in the Federated States of Micronesia on Sept. 24, 2023.

USCG

The USCGC *Oliver Henry* (WPC 1140) crew deliver supplies and the principal to Nukuoro, an atoll in the Federated States of Micronesia, on Sept. 24, 2023.

USCG

The USCGC *Oliver Henry* (WPC 1140) crew deliver supplies to Kapingiamarangi, an atoll in the Federated States of Micronesia, on Sept. 25, 2023.

### About US Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/ Sector Guam

U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam serves as a linchpin for U.S. maritime interests in the region, fostering enduring partnerships with regional allies. The 300-strong team emphasizes maritime safety, security, and stewardship, reinforcing the U.S. Coast Guard's long-standing reputation as a trusted partner in Blue Pacific.

### About USCGC *Oliver Henry*

USCGC *Oliver Henry* (WPC 1140) is the 40th 154-foot Sentinel-class Fast Response Cutter named for Oliver T. Henry, Jr., an enlisted African American Coast Guard member first to break the color barrier of a then-segregated Service. Designed for many missions, including search and rescue, national defense, and maritime law enforcement, the *Oliver Henry* plays a significant role in safeguarding national interests and preserving good maritime governance. ***(USCG)***

USCG

The USCGC *Oliver Henry* (WPC 1140) crew deliver supplies to Kapingiamarangi, an atoll in the Federated States of Micronesia, on Sept. 25, 2023.

# Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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## EDITORIAL

# We must get the Americans out of Gaza

It's a fundamental responsibility of government to come to the aid of American citizens in peril overseas.

That's why the U.S. traded the release from prison of the notorious Viktor Bout, a Russian arms dealer, for the release from Russia of U.S. basketball star Brittney Griner, who then revised her opinion about standing on the court for the U.S. national anthem.

So far, Michigan native Paul Whelan, who has languished in a Russian jail since 2018, has not been so fortunate, although his family and friends continue to campaign for his release. So do The Wall Street Journal and its journalists for their colleague Evan Gershkovich, a U.S. citizen who just spent his 32nd birthday in a Russian prison and for whose release we continue to call.

The U.S. citizens currently trapped in the Gaza Strip, where Israel is waging war with Hamas and conditions are deteriorating, certainly are not high-profile athletes, and they lack high-profile media campaigns for their release. But be they hostages held by Hamas or ordinary residents of, or visitors to, the Gaza Strip, their passports give them the right to expect timely U.S. help.

Given the conditions in Gaza, we urge the Biden administration to amp up its efforts to get U.S. citizens out.

We don't doubt such efforts are being made. But national security adviser Jake Sullivan said Sunday that, while both Israel and Egypt were ready to let the international citizens out, Hamas was blocking the exit of all foreign citizens from Gaza and "making demands," which implies they want to use the internationals as a bargaining chip. Some 600 Americans are said to be seeking an exit from Gaza, as are some 200 British citizens, as well as a number of French and German citizens and those of other nations. The Daily Telegraph reported Sunday that the U.K. shares the U.S. concern about the Hamas tactics.

On Monday, Robert Halfon, a British government minister, told Sky News that if foreign citizens are not being allowed to travel out of Gaza, then "that is a form of hostage taking."

He is right. Hamas cannot be allowed to block the U.S. from removing its citizens.

Obviously, this is all a matter of negotiation that must be pursued with an eye to avoiding potentially catastrophic escalation. But whether by land, sea or air, on their own feet or with the direct intervention of their government, U.S. citizens in Gaza must be allowed to leave.

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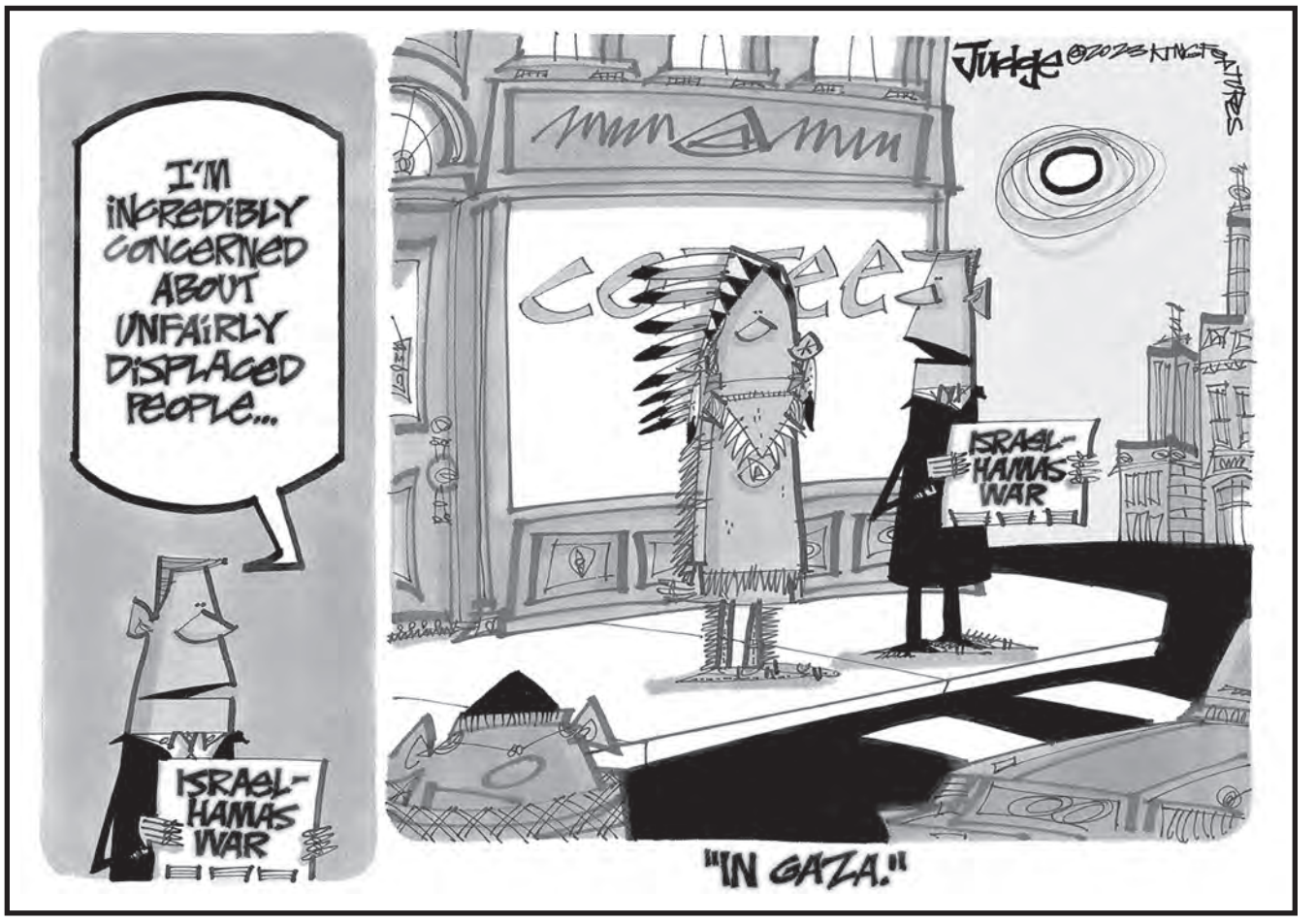


# Why doctors should get to know AI as well as they know their spouses

**By KATHERINE GOODMAN and DANIEL MORGAN**
THE BALTIMORE SUN

ChatGPT has made artificial intelligence widely available, including for doctors. Other types of medical AI and algorithms are getting smarter. And with new FDA efforts underway to evaluate many algorithms, higher quality ones will increasingly enter routine clinical use, aiding in everything from the detection of heart attacks to treatment decisions for cancer.

In theory, these advances are great news. But they won't lead to better diagnostic ability and patient treatment unless doctors change how they approach clinical care. Even worse, using algorithms and AI in the wrong way can harm patients, yet most U.S. medical students currently learn little to nothing about these technologies.

We recently proposed curricula in the New England Journal of Medicine to prepare physicians for these coming changes. To benefit from AI while keeping patients safe, doctors must know these technologies intimately—how they "think," what they're good at and where they're limited—as you might understand a trusted colleague or even a spouse.

In other words, doctors should view these technologies as partners, not programs.

How do we build strong doctor-AI partnerships? Communication is critical. But right now, doctors and AI don't speak the same language.

When doctors think and talk about disease, their language is physiological: which bodily systems are involved, and how those systems relate to patient symptoms or laboratory findings. But when algorithms and AI analyze large swathes of patient data to predict outcomes or find relational patterns, they do so in a purely quantitative way. Their "language" is one of numerical probabilities: a 10% probability that a woman with abdominal pain is having a heart attack, a 70% probability that a patient with a lung mass on a CT scan has cancer.

Having real-world probabilities supports doctors making better diagnoses, prognoses and treatment recommendations. For example, a doctor may conclude that a patient has "all the signs" of a particular diagnosis, yet may benefit from an algorithmic reminder that the probability of that diagnosis is under 50%, meaning the patient could easily have something else and the doctor should continue investigating (and AI may even suggest alternative diagnoses ).

However, these benefits only materialize if doctors are comfortable using and thinking in terms of probabilities—and currently, many doctors struggle with this.

How can doctors think more probabilistically? For one, many medical students arrive at medical school having never taken statistics, and we agree with others that statistics and epidemiology matter more than the typical pre-medical calculus course to practicing medicine. Once in medical school, students should practice using probabilities to make decisions, not simply memorizing formulas. At the University of Maryland School of Medicine, we have developed online visualization tools (testingwisely.com) to make thinking in terms of probabilities more intuitive, reflecting recent advances in the psychology of decision-making and risk assessment.

Second, doctors must understand the limitations of their AI partners and set realistic expectations.

For example, imagine an algorithm flags a patient as low risk for developing heart disease because their yearly blood work is normal and they don't have diabetes or high blood pressure. If the patient's siblings have had heart attacks but the algorithm didn't "know" this information when it made its prediction, that's important for a physician to understand and could mean the algorithm underestimated the patient's true risk. Better, more transparent algorithms will reduce, but cannot fully prevent, these scenarios. Therefore, doctors' judgment—and some healthy skepticism—remain essential.

Finally, it's an unwritten rule that partnerships often divide tasks by skill sets (in our respective households, we're usually on dish duty). A doctor-AI partnership will be similar. Eventually, algorithms may routinely scan patients' medical records, linking their symptoms to potentially overlooked diagnoses or providing tailored risk predictions for development of conditions like cancer. Due to the sheer volume of today's medical records, this is something machines will always do better than physicians. But deciding how to act on this information is something only doctors and patients can do. It requires weighing potential harms, benefits and patient preferences. Doing this well requires critical thinking and clear communication with patients to support joint decision-making. These skills aren't always intuitive, and we must teach them to physicians.

Today, thousands of students across the country are in their first months of medical school. What students learn now, and how medicine adapts to algorithms and AI, will matter to patient care. These technologies are more than mere programs, but far from replacing physicians. They're partners, and there is an art and science to combining their skills well. At the end of the day, we are all patients—and should care that medicine gets this relationship right.

*Katherine Goodman is an epidemiologist, an assistant professor of epidemiology and public health at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, and an investigator at the University of Maryland Institute for Health Computing. Daniel Morgan is a physician, a professor of epidemiology, public health and infectious diseases, and director of the Center for Innovation in Diagnosis, at the University of Maryland School of Medicine.*

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# After 75 years of conflict, it's clear that persistent war in Gaza is not the answer

**By STORER H. ROWLEY**
Chicago Tribune

*Storer H. Rowley, a former national editor and foreign correspondent for the* Chicago Tribune, *teaches journalism and communication at Northwestern University.*

The Middle East once again perches on the precipice of all-out war.

Thousands of Israeli and Palestinian civilians are dead or wounded, many of them children. More than 200 Israelis and others remain hostages of Hamas in Gaza as that 25-mile-long coastal strip devolves into a humanitarian catastrophe. The U.S. military is sending more ships, planes and Marines, while American forces come under fire in Iraq and Syria and retaliate with airstrikes.

As Israel expands ground operations and Israeli tanks have rolled into parts of the Gaza strip, it is worth remembering this conflict between Israelis and Palestinians has gone on for 75 years, and if one thing has been proved again and again, war after war, it's this: There is no military solution to this seemingly forever war.

> The war is more awful evidence that the current Israeli strategy regarding Palestinians is not working.

With the worst violence and carnage unfolding since the 1973 Yom Kippur War, it should be agonizingly evident by now that peace can never be achieved without a long-term strategy to seek agreements between Israelis and Palestinians. Even families of the hostages have called for a pause in Israel's ground assault.

Since the collapse of the 1993 Oslo peace accords, key final status issues remain unresolved between the parties, including competing claims to security, justice, Jerusalem and fair shares of the Holy Land—not to mention what to do about Israeli settlers and Palestinian refugees. The bloodshed of October has extinguished any prospect for peace for now, perhaps for years to come.

The war is more awful evidence that the current Israeli strategy regarding Palestinians is not working. Five wars between Israel and Hamas over the past 15 years should make it manifestly obvious that managing the conflict is not viable. Violence grows in the West Bank while the besieged Gaza Strip remains an open-air prison that some now call a graveyard.

Eventually, the parties must return to serious negotiations, even though those seem ineffably distant. U.S. support for a two-state solution sounds like a naive dream right now, but that remains the most likely plan for a successful, permanent solution.

America has lived through this kind of bloody scenario after the 9/11 attacks by al-Qaida, and President Joe Biden reminded Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that the U.S. made errors in its rushed response. When Biden visited Israel recently, he wisely cautioned the Israeli government "not to be blinded by rage," noting, "We felt enraged as well. While we sought and got justice, we made mistakes."

Those errors included plunging the U.S. into a war of choice in Iraq, a country that didn't attack America. In response to 9/11, the U.S. also launched a 20-year military campaign against al-Qaida and the Taliban in Afghanistan. While the U.S. degraded and decimated al-Qaida, it got bogged down there. The wars together cost the lives of some 7,000 U.S. service members and an estimated $8 trillion.

Israel has every right to defend itself after Hamas terrorists slaughtered at least 1,400 Israelis on Oct. 7—the largest massacre of Jews in a single day since the Holocaust. There is no justification for Hamas atrocities. Iran-backed Hamas is not interested in making peace with Israel. Per its charter, this group is dedicated to killing Jews and destroying the Jewish state. It is classified by the U.S. and the European Union as a terrorist organization.

But the Israeli bombing campaign in Gaza since Oct. 7 has killed more than 7,000 Palestinians, more than a third of them children; displaced 1 million people; and destroyed thousands of buildings. If Israel moves in next with a major ground offensive, many more will die in Gaza in close urban battles.

Biden was right to tell the world the U.S. stands with Israel, but he was also wise to caution Netanyahu to follow the laws of war, minimize civilian deaths and not to reoccupy Gaza. More important, Israel needs to think through its endgame and an exit strategy and who will be in charge of Gaza once it crushes Hamas and its leaders.

The moderate self-rule Palestinian Authority, which governs parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank, is the logical choice, and it has recognized Israel and agreed to negotiate the final status issues. However, it will be loath to take over Gaza—and have little credibility with Palestinians—if it is installed after an Israeli invasion. More likely, an international, Arab League or United Nations peacekeeping force will be needed first.

Netanyahu's government is the most extreme in Israel's history and includes racist and anti-Arab cabinet ministers determined to expand illegal Jewish settlements in the West Bank and kill the possibility of a two-state solution. But unless Netanyahu can offer Palestinians a vision of a brighter future or a path back to peace talks and eventual statehood, there is little incentive for Palestinians to work for peace. Crushing Hamas terrorists will not eliminate the resistance to an occupation most of the world considers illegal under international law.

To be sure, the Palestinians have been their own worst enemy over the years, rejecting peace deals with Israel that would have moved them toward peace and statehood. But a return to the status quo ante before the current conflict would bring more of the same stalemate and hopelessness that breeds young Arab fighters.

Moreover, Mideast experts see Netanyahu's strategy through successive governments as a way of keeping Hamas propped up in Gaza with aid from Qatar, while keeping the rival Palestinian Authority under President Mahmoud Abbas weak and ineffectual in the West Bank—in effect, giving Israel an excuse for not negotiating with Abbas on Palestinian statehood.

In the Mideast conflict, stalemate creates a vacuum, and violence always fills the gap. The U.S. should stand with Israel but also for a free Palestine. The two are not mutually exclusive. Only a political decision by both sides to create a path to peace, as impossible as that seems right now, can bring an end to persistent war.

Until that happens, Israelis and Palestinians remain at risk. Peace is their only hope.

# When accountability goes, so does legitimacy

**By KEVIN FRAZIER**
The Fulcrum

*Kevin Frazier is an assistant professor at the Crump College of Law at St. Thomas University. He previously clerked for the Montana Supreme Court.*

"I'm just the middle guy." It seems like a harmless and justifiable excuse. But when entire companies, governments and communities become dominated by "middle guys" working for "the boss," the little guys lose out. This may not seem like a problem to those who can afford to get around middle guys. These are the folks who seemingly float above the barriers that slow everyone else down. They're the handful of individuals who can, for example, charter private jets and avoid the airline ticket counter—a dominion controlled exclusively by middle guys whose hands are always tied.

It turns out there's rarely a middle guy who can't be circumvented with some time and money. For everyone else, there's a looming accountability crisis brought on by promises being made by individuals and institutions with no intention of ever keeping them—and instead putting the blame on an unaccountable middle guy.

Accountability does not exist if those who hold power don't face consequences for taking inadequate, illegal or immoral actions. In the Age of the Middle Guy, Average Joes and Janes cannot afford to go after "the boss," who is protected by complex contracts, well-paid lawyers and deep pockets. In short, in too many situations it now takes time and money to get back your time and money.

Case in point, my friends hired a moving company to deliver their goods to a home in a new state. Well, that's what they thought. In actuality, they hired a "broker," who hired a "mover," who hired contractors to move their stuff. When their goods arrived damaged and two weeks late, they tried to get a refund from the contractors—who pointed them to the mover, who pointed them to the broker, who never answered their calls. My friends wanted to hire an attorney to go after anyone and everyone but lacked the time and money to get back their time and money.

Initially, I questioned why my friends didn't read enough Google reviews to hire a better company. Then, I realized … Wow! I have sipped way too much Kool-Aid. I rushed to question the consumer—the Joes and Janes with no power rather than an industry and culture that has robbed little guys of any means to impose consequences on those who should be held accountable.

Those in power go out of their way to diminish the likelihood and magnitude of those consequences. In other words, they try to reduce the odds of getting caught and, if they somehow are caught, they try to limit the severity of the punishment.

Over time, the powerful have created more and more creative ways to evade detection and escape punishment. They'll use distance (see King George counting on an ocean to avoid facing the colonists); time (see dictators throughout history delaying elections); middle guys (see moving companies hiring contractors); and bureaucracy (see some governments)—all in an effort to reduce the odds of little guys coordinating to actively hold them to account.

Regrettably, the powerful usually succeed. Little guys don't have the time and resources to sail across the sea or, in modern times, wait on hold. What's more, even when the powerful get caught in the act, they manage to avoid facing severe consequences—their contracts are too strong, their lawyers are on speed dial, and their political ties are too deep.

When accountability goes, so does legitimacy. When little guy after little guy has a story about being taken advantage of, with nothing to show for their suffering, entire institutions can start to crumble. The stories of corruption spread and the willingness of Joes and Janes everywhere to trust institutions dissipates.

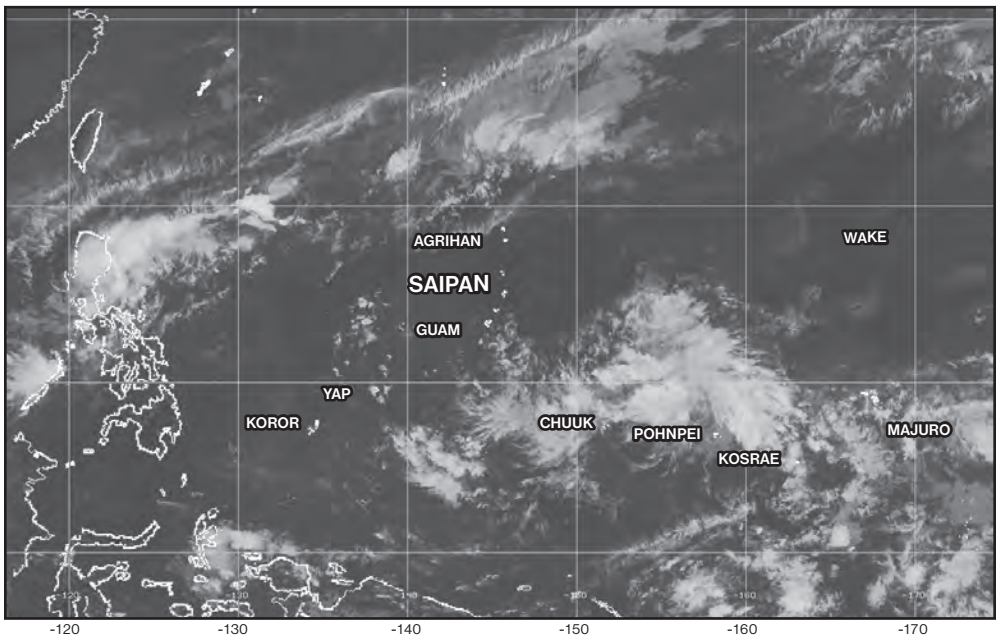
That lack of trust is spreading today and has become one of the most important issues of our time. One way to restore that trust is to look for ways—through regulations, rules and norms—to cut out the middle guy and make sure that the powerful can be directly, swiftly and appropriately held to account.

# The Weather

## 5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

| TODAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY | SUNDAY | MONDAY |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East to northeast winds 10 to 15 mph. | Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East to northeast winds 10 to 15 mph. | Mostly cloudy. A 30 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. | Mostly cloudy. A 30 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. | Mostly cloudy with a chance of showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms. |
| 88 78° | 88 78° | 88 78° | 88 78° | 88 78° |

## YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE




**PICTURE TIME: 5:42 AM, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2023**

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Drier conditions with mainly passing trade showers expected for the rest of the work week as the surface trough the brought scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms yesterday has pushed west of the Marianas and ridging builds overhead in its wake. A better chance for showers and thunderstorms possible over the weekend into early next week as models continue to indicate a possible disturbance passing near to south of the Marianas.

*Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/*

| MICRONESIA | | ▲ ▼ °F |
|---|---|---|
| Guam and Rota | Partly Cloudy | 84° / 79° |
| Palau | Partly Cloudy | 84° / 78° |
| Yap | Cloudy | 84° / 79° |
| Chuuk | Thunderstorms | 88° / 81° |
| Pohnpei | Thunderstorms | 88° / 77° |
| Kosrae | Thunderstorms | 88° / 77° |
| Majuro | Cloudy | 86° / 80° |

| DAY | SUNRISE | SUNSET |
|---|---|---|
| Today | 6:13 AM | 5:47 PM |
| Friday | 6:13 AM | 5:47 PM |
| Saturday | 6:13 AM | 5:47 PM |
| Sunday | 6:14 AM | 5:46 PM |
| Monday | 6:14 AM | 5:46 PM |

| DAY | MOONRISE | MOONSET | MOONRISE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Today | - | 10:12 AM | 9:31 PM |
| Friday | - | 11:06 AM | 10:27 PM |
| Saturday | - | 11:56 AM | 11:21 PM |
| Sunday | - | 12:40 PM | - |
| Monday | 12:13 AM | 1:20 PM | - |

| AROUND THE GLOBE | | ▲ ▼ °F |
|---|---|---|
| Auckland | Cloudy | 66° / 59° |
| Beijing | Cloudy | 69° / 59° |
| Hong Kong | Cloudy | 69° / 59° |
| Honolulu | Partly Cloudy | 85° / 71° |
| London | Partly Cloudy | 85° / 71° |
| Los Angeles | Partly Cloudy | 86° / 55° |
| Manila | Partly Cloudy | 86° / 55° |
| Melbourne | Showers | 72° / 55° |
| Miami | Thunderstorms | 85° / 72° |
| New York | Cloudy | 52° / 47° |
| Osaka | Sunny | 73° / 55° |
| Paris | Cloudy | 64° / 54° |
| Busan | Sunny | 70° / 52° |
| Rome | Sunny | 72° / 50° |
| Salem | Sunny | 70° / 43° |
| San Francisco | Sunny | 79° / 54° |
| Seoul | Cloudy | 69° /60° |
| Tokyo | Sunny | 77° / 57° |
| Washington, DC | Partly Cloudy | 53° / 46° |

| TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY | | FEET |
|---|---|---|
| 4:25 AM | Low Tide | -0.38 |
| 12:01 PM | High Tide | 1.70 |
| 5:20 PM | Low Tide | 1.26 |
| 9:18 PM | High Tide | 1.56 |

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## FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 30, 2023

### DEPARTURES

**SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA076 | 9:50AM | 10:30AM | Daily |

**SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA824 | 7:05AM | 9:45AM | 1, 3, 5 |

**GUAM-MANILA (MNL)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| PR 111 | 5:55AM | 7:55AM | Daily |
| UA193 | 7:50PM | 11:50PM | 2, 5 via Palau |
| UA183 | 7:55PM | 9:50PM | Daily |

**SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7C3403/2305 | 4:40AM | 10:20PM | Daily |
| UA076/183 | 9:50AM | 9:50PM | Daily via Guam |
| UA076/193 | 9:50AM | 11:50PM | 2, 5 via Guam, Palau |

**SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| TW308 | 2:15AM | 6:10AM | Daily |
| 7C3403 | 4:40AM | 8:35AM | Daily |
| 7C3405 | 4:35PM | 8:25PM | Daily |

### ARRIVALS

**GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA174 | 8:00AM | 8:45AM | Daily |

**NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA825 | 9:25PM | 2:00AM+1 | 2, 4, 7 |

**MANILA (MNL)-GUAM**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA189 | 00:40AM | 6:30AM | 3, 6 |
| PR110 | 10:05PM | 3:55AM+1 | Daily |
| UA192 | 10:40PM | 6:30AM+1 | 2, 5 via Palau |
| UA184 | 10:55PM | 4:45AM+1 | 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 |

**MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA189/174 | 00:40AM | 8:45AM+1 | 3, 6 via Guam |
| UA192/174 | 10:40PM | 8:45AM+1 | 2, 5 via Palau, Guam |
| UA184/174 | 10:55PM | 8:45AM+1 | 1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam |
| 7C2306/3406 | 11:15PM | 3:30PM+1 | Daily |

**INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7C3406 | 10:10AM | 3:30PM | Daily |
| TW307 | 7:45PM | 1:15AM+1 | Daily |
| 7C3404 | 10:15PM | 3:35AM+1 | Daily |

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

## STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 30, 2023

**SAIPAN TO ROTA**

| FLIGHT # | FROM | TO | DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1301 | SAIPAN | ROTA | 08:30 | 09:00 | Oct 21-31, 2023 |
| 1302 | SAIPAN | ROTA | 10:30 | 11:00 | Daily |
| 1303 | SAIPAN | ROTA | 15:30 | 16:00 | Daily |

**ROTA TO SAIPAN**

| FLIGHT # | FROM | TO | DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3101 | ROTA | SAIPAN | 9:30 | 10:00 | Oct 21-31, 2023 |
| 3102 | ROTA | SAIPAN | 11:30 | 12:00 | Saturday & Sunday |
| 3103 | ROTA | SAIPAN | 13:30 | 14:00 | Monday To Friday |
| 3104 | ROTA | SAIPAN | 16:30 | 17:00 | Daily |

**ROTA TO GUAM**

| FLIGHT # | FROM | TO | DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3401 | ROTA | GUAM | 11:30 | 12:00 | Monday To Friday |

**GUAM TO ROTA**

| FLIGHT # | FROM | TO | DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4301 | GUAM | ROTA | 12:30 | 13:00 | Monday To Friday |

**SAIPAN TO TINIAN**

| FLIGHT # | FROM | TO | DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1201 | SAIPAN | TINIAN | 7:30 | 7:45 | Daily |
| 1202 | SAIPAN | TINIAN | 8:00 | 8:15 | Daily |
| 1203 | SAIPAN | TINIAN | 9:00 | 9:15 | Daily |
| 1204 | SAIPAN | TINIAN | 10:00 | 10:15 | Daily |
| 1206 | SAIPAN | TINIAN | 15:00 | 15:15 | Daily |
| 1207 | SAIPAN | TINIAN | 16:00 | 16:15 | Daily |
| 1208 | SAIPAN | TINIAN | 17:00 | 17:15 | Daily |

**TINIAN TO SAIPAN**

| FLIGHT # | FROM | TO | DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2101 | TINIAN | SAIPAN | 8:00 | 8:15 | Daily |
| 2102 | TINIAN | SAIPAN | 8:30 | 8:45 | Daily |
| 2103 | TINIAN | SAIPAN | 9:30 | 9:45 | Daily |
| 2104 | TINIAN | SAIPAN | 10:30 | 10:45 | Daily |
| 2106 | TINIAN | SAIPAN | 15:30 | 15:45 | Daily |
| 2107 | TINIAN | SAIPAN | 16:30 | 16:45 | Daily |
| 2108 | TINIAN | SAIPAN | 17:30 | 17:45 | Daily |

# Business

IN SUPPORT OF UOG 'G IS FOR GIVING' CAMPAIGN

## The Tsubaki Tower launches donation drive

» Throughout November, Tsubaki will make a donation for every Casa Oceano guest

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Throughout November, The Tsubaki Tower will make a donation for every guest who dines at Casa Oceano in support of the University of Guam Endowment Foundation's annual "G is for Giving" campaign and scholarship drive.

**TUMON, Guam**—The Tsubaki Tower announced a special November donation drive for the University of Guam Endowment Foundation's annual "G is for Giving" campaign and scholarship drive.

Throughout the month, The Tsubaki Tower will make a donation for every guest who dines at Casa Oceano in support of the campaign.

The resort's general manager Ken Yanagisawa noted that after meeting with the university's Endowment Foundation, the Tsubaki team was motivated to find a unique way to help raise funds for the scholarship drive. Launched in 2017, UOG's "G is for Giving" program allows the university to directly support students through many academic scholarships available each year.

To date, the campaign has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarship funding.

Yanagisawa said, "Anyone in this tourism industry understands the need to support the next generation of hoteliers and tourism professionals. On Guam, tourism is still recovering from the pandemic and Super Typhoon Mawar, and we need to fortify the programs in place that provide the education, training, and guidance for future tourism industry leaders of Guam. UOG does a fantastic job of this, and we are proud to do what we can to support their mission."

The donation will be made to UOG during the first week of December.

Yanagisawa added, "We encourage fellow hotels and businesses on Guam to consider supporting the UOG Endowment Foundation's "G is for Giving" campaign. Money raised will directly benefit students through scholarships or program support. Participating businesses can choose which UOG scholarships or programs they wish to support."

Reservations for Casa Oceano can be made by phone at 671-969-5200. PHR Club and military discounts are accepted; please inquire for more details.

### The Tsubaki journey

The Tsubaki Tower is an unforgettable luxury resort experience in Guam. The Tsubaki Tower's mission is to be an authentic ambassador of Guam's culture, natural beauty, and unique history.

Located along the shores of stunning Gun Beach, the 27-story resort will offer guests panoramic views of Guam's famous sunsets and the warm blues of the Pacific Ocean. The resort is nestled in the northern part of Tumon Bay and features 340 breathtaking oceanfront rooms and suites, all within walking distance of Guam's most beautiful white-sand beaches and a world-class marine preserve. The resort features two types of dining, three types of bars, a lobby lounge, deli, club lounge, swimming pools, garden plaza, multifunction room, and a chapel in the sky.

For further information about The Tsubaki Tower, please call 671-969-5200, visit tsubaki-tower.premierhotel-group.com/guam/, or engage with them on Instagram and Facebook (@thetsubakitower).

### About Premier Hotel Group

Premier Hotel Group has been managing hotels for more than 15 years. PHG is a member of Ken Corporation Group, a pioneer in the high-end real estate rental market in metropolitan areas. Currently, PHG owns and operates a total of 32 hotels—23 properties throughout major cities in Japan, such as Tokyo, Osaka, and Okinawa, and nine hotels in Guam, Saipan, and the U.S. in collaboration with several international hotel chains. For more information about Premier Hotel Group, visit premierhotel-group.com/eng/. ***(PR)***

## Micronesia Mall relaunches car giveaway promotion

» Micronesia Mall and Atkins Kroll Launch Shop, Dine & Win Promotion for 2024

**DEDEDO, Guam**—Micronesia Mall is pleased to announce the launch of the Shop, Dine & Win promotion on Sunday, Nov. 5, 2023 at 1pm at its Center Court.

With major sponsors Atkins Kroll, Goodwind Travel & Tour GSA for Philippine Airlines, Burger King, and Foot Locker, the Mall will be revealing the new vehicles and prizes to be give away this coming year.

Shop, Dine & Win replaces the long-running Shop & Win, Micronesia Mall's premier vehicle and travel giveaway. After a short hiatus to celebrate their 35th anniversary this year in September, Micronesia Mall decided to revamp the promotion with increased prizes and a fresh new look. The launch this Sunday will also mark the start of the promotion where the Mall will begin accepting receipts in exchange for scratch cards to win instant prizes or entry to win the grand prize vehicle.

Grand prize drawing dates:

- Feb. 3, 2024
- June 29, 2024
- Nov. 9, 2024

For more information or a full schedule of events, visit Micronesia Mall on Facebook and Instagram or by emailing marketing@micronesiamall.com. ***(PR)***

## Auto strike settlements will raise costs for Detroit's Big 3

**DETROIT** (AP)—From generous pay and benefits to stronger job security, the United Auto Workers union won significant concessions in tentative settlements that have ended their strikes against Detroit's three automakers.

Now, General Motors, Ford and Stellantis are facing sharply higher labor costs, estimated by some analysts at exceeding $1 billion per year, per company. The automakers will try to absorb those cost increases through expense reductions and efficiencies while still aiming to post strong enough profits to please Wall Street.

In addition, analysts say, the companies will likely try to offset their cost increases by raising vehicle prices for consumers. How much they'll be able to do so, though, remains unclear. American auto buyers are already facing enormous price runups since the pandemic: The average new-car price has soared roughly 25% since the pandemic struck three years ago.

Customers might assume that nonunion automakers, like Toyota, Tesla or Hyundai-Kia, will now be able to price their vehicles well below what the Detroit automakers can. But history shows that the nonunion companies will eventually feel compelled to raise their factory wages, too, in their effort to ward off the UAW's efforts to unionize their factories. As their own labor costs rise, they, too, would likely impose price increases.

At the same time, the breadth of competition means that while GM, Ford and Stellantis will seek to raise vehicle prices, it might prove difficult to make significant price hikes stick.

"I don't think consumers will necessarily readily absorb all the price increases," said Jonathan Smoke, chief economist for Cox Automotive. "We are bound to see continued growth in discounting, which has just started to recover as supplies improve."

## A continuing decline in sales of COVID-19 products clips revenue at Pfizer

Pfizer lost more than $2 billion in the third quarter as an expected COVID-19 product sales decline clipped revenue.

Sales of the drugmaker's COVID treatment Paxlovid and the vaccine Comirnaty slid 97% and 70%, respectively, as Pfizer, like its competitors, switched to selling on the commercial market instead of to governments.

Both the company and analysts who follow it expected revenue from those key products to tumble this year before eventually rebounding as commercial sales take hold. Two weeks ago, Pfizer Inc. warned that sales of its COVID-19 drugs were weaker than it had expected, and it cut its annual revenue expectations by $9 billion.

Falling sales of both Paxlovid and Comirnaty also trimmed sales in the second quarter, but Pfizer said in August that it expected a rebound in the second half of 2023.

In the third quarter, the drugmaker booked a noncash, $5.6 billion charge for inventory write-offs of the COVID products.

Outside those products, the drugmaker said its operational revenue, which excludes the impact of foreign exchange rates, grew 10%, helped in part by growth from its Prevnar pneumonia vaccines.

"Our core business is performing nicely," Chief Financial Officer David Denton told analysts. "We continue to make traction."

Overall, the New York company reported a loss adjusted for one-time gains or losses of 17 cents per share. That was much narrower loss than the 42 cents that Wall Street had expected, according to a survey of industry analysts by FactSet.

Total revenue fell 42% to $13.23 billion. Analysts had forecast revenue of $13.77 billion.

Pfizer expects full-year adjusted earnings of $1.45 to $1.65 per share.

Analysts expect, on average, earnings of $2.13 per share, according to FactSet.

The company has started a cost cutting program that it expects to yield at least $3.5 billion in savings by the end of 2024. ***(AP)***

# Nation

# White House will develop anti-Islamophobia strategy

## » But faces skepticism from Muslim Americans

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—President Joe Biden's administration is preparing to announce that it will develop a national strategy to combat Islamophobia, according to people briefed on the matter, as it faces skepticism from many in the Muslim American community for its staunch support of Israel's military assault on Hamas in Gaza.

The White House announcement had originally been expected to come week when Biden held a meeting with Muslim leaders, but was delayed, three people said. Two of them said the delay was due in part to concerns from the Muslim American community that the administration lacked credibility on the issue given its robust support for Israel's military, whose strikes against Hamas militants have also killed thousands of civilians in Gaza. The people spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss the White House plans.

AP

President Joe Biden speaks during an event on protecting retirement security against what are commonly referred to as "junk fees" in the State Dining Room of the White House, Tuesday, Oct. 31, 2023, in Washington.

The launch of the anti-Islamophobia strategy has been anticipated for months, after the administration in May released a national strategy to combat antisemitism that also made passing reference to countering hatred against Muslims. The formal strategy is expected to take many months to formalize, following a similar process as the plan to counter antisemitism involving various government agencies.

Incidences of anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim hate have skyrocketed in the U.S. and abroad since the surprise Oct. 7 attack by Hamas militants on Israel that killed over 1,400 and saw hundreds taken hostage, and Israel's response in Gaza, where it has pledged to use force to "destroy" Hamas. One of the most prominent attacks was the killing of 6-year-old Wadea Al-Fayoume and the wounding of his mother in an attack prosecutors allege was driven by Islamophobia.

"This horrific act of hate has no place in America and stands against our fundamental values: freedom from fear for how we pray, what we believe, and who we are," Biden said in the aftermath of the attack.

There had been widespread agreement among the Muslim American community on the need for a national strategy to counter Islamophobia, according to a fourth person familiar with the matter, who added that the Israel-Hamas war has made the timing of the White House announcement more complicated. The person, who was also not authorized to speak publicly, said the Biden administration wants to keep the two issues separate, while some prominent Muslim American groups see them as interrelated.

Biden administration officials, during a meeting with a small group of faith leaders last week, indicated that things were "in the works" for an anti-Islamophobia strategy, said Rami Nashashibi, the founder of the Inner City Muslim Action Network in Chicago and a participant in the meeting. The officials indicated that they would be meeting with additional stakeholders from the community in coming days and weeks.

Nashashibi said he believed such an effort would be "dead on arrival" with the Muslim community until the president and administration officials forcefully condemn members of the far-right government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who have openly called for the eradication of Palestinians from Gaza and until the administration more aggressively calls out hate crimes targeting Muslims and Arab Americans.

He and other leaders also want the president to apologize, or at least publicly clarify, his recent comments in which he said he had "no confidence" in the Palestinian death count from Israel's retaliatory strikes, because the data comes from the Hamas-run Health Ministry.

The United Nations and other international institutions and experts, as well as Palestinian authorities in the West Bank—rivals of Hamas—say the Gaza ministry has long made a good-faith effort to account for the dead under the most difficult conditions. In previous wars, the ministry's counts have held up to U.N. scrutiny, independent investigations and even Israel's tallies.

## LARGEST INCREASE IN 20 YEARS

# US infant mortality rate rose last year

**NEW YORK** (AP)—The U.S. infant mortality rate rose 3% last year—the largest increase in two decades, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

White and Native American infants, infant boys and babies born at 37 weeks or earlier had significant death rate increases. The CDC's report, published Wednesday, also noted larger increases for two of the leading causes of infant deaths—maternal complications and bacterial meningitis.

"It's definitely concerning, given that it's going in the opposite direction from what it has been," said Marie Thoma, a University of Maryland researcher who studies maternal and infant mortality.

Dr. Eric Eichenwald, a Philadelphia-based neonatologist, called the new data "disturbing," but said experts at this point can only speculate as to why a statistic that generally has been falling for decades rose sharply in 2022.

RSV and flu infections rebounded last fall after two years of pandemic precautions, filling pediatric emergency rooms across the country. "That could potentially account for some of it," said Eichenwald, who chairs an American Academy of Pediatrics committee that writes guidelines for medical care of newborns.

Infant mortality is the measure of how many babies die before they reach their first birthday. Because the number of babies born in the U.S. varies from year to year, researchers instead calculate rates to better compare infant mortality over time. The U.S. infant mortality rate has been worse than other high-income countries, which experts have attributed to poverty, inadequate prenatal care and other possibilities. But even so, the U.S. rate generally gradually improved because of medical advances and public health efforts.

The national rate rose to 5.6 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in 2022, up from from 5.44 per 1,000 the year before, the new report said.

The increase may seem small, but it's the first statistically significant jump in the rate since the increase between 2001 and 2002, said Danielle Ely, the CDC report's lead author. She also said researchers could not establish whether the 2022 rise was a one-year statistical blip—or the beginning of a more lasting trend.

Overall in the U.S., the death rate fell 5% in 2022—a general decrease that's been attributed to the waning impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially on people 65 and older. U.S. maternal deaths also fell last year.

# Children return to school and trick-or-treat as Maine community starts to heal

**LEWISTON, Maine** (AP)—Children were back in school in Lewiston and on the streets dressed as dinosaurs and princesses for Halloween, after a chaotic week that saw the deadliest mass shooting in Maine's history and a massive search for the suspect as people sheltered indoors.

Hundreds of students returned to Lewiston High School, petting therapy dogs and signing a large banner that read "Lewiston Strong." Days earlier the campus had been transformed into a law enforcement command post, with helicopters utilizing athletic fields and 300 vehicles filling the parking lot.

"Today's going to be hard," Superintendent Jake Langlais said. "But I think there's strength in gathering, in unity, in getting back together."

Jayden Sands, a 15-year-old sophomore, said one of his football coaches lost four friends. One of his best friends also lost a friend, and his mom's friend was shot four times but survived.

Sands is glad to be back at school though safety was in the back of his mind.

"A lot of people are shocked and scared," he said. "I'm just happy to be here. You know, another day to live. Hopefully it gets better."

On Wednesday night, a U.S. Army reservist and firearms instructor from Bowdoin fatally shot 18 people at a bowling alley and a bar. A massive search followed on land and water for 40-year-old Robert Card. Authorities issued a shelter-in-place order for residents before Card was found dead Friday.

Nearly a week later, parents and children were searching for candy in their favorite costumes, many thronging a long-running event put on by Peter Geiger, whose Lewiston-based business publishes the Farmers' Almanac. Each year hundreds visit to get king-size candy bars—as long as they know the "secret" password—which this Halloween was "Lewiston Strong."

And again, the streets were filled with assorted ghosts, monsters, Disney princesses and blow-up dinosaurs, a Halloween almost like any other.

"I hurt as much as anyone else. For all of us there's a loss," Geiger said. "But I'm not going to let somebody undo a fun night for kids and families."

Michelle Russell, assistant principal at McMahon Elementary School, who was with her granddaughter, dressed as a witch, said it was important to go trick-or-treating.

"We're trying to get back to normal, if we can do that. We're taking it slow," she said.

Logan Phelps, of Greene, said Halloween was a distraction from a tough week, including some difficult discussions he and wife Rebecca had with the kids.

Luna, 5, and Juniper, 3, were both dressed as Wonder Woman, and their 20-month-old brother, Allister, as a Triceratops.

"At the end of the day, you've got to keep going, and you've got to keep living your life," Phelps said.

Heather Hunter, a city administrator in Lewiston, said she was heartened to see steps toward normalcy but acknowledged the community has a long way to go.

"It's similar to COVID. We're adjusting to a new normal," she said.

Back at Lewiston High School, senior Calista Karas said students have much to process. Sheltering at home was frightening, Karas said. And on the day of the shootings, she couldn't immediately reach her mother, who was at work.

"I just couldn't believe something like this would happen here—to us," Karas said.

When she walked through the school doors Tuesday, she felt her stomach drop somewhat. "It was a weird experience to walk though school and see … life going on," she said.

# Asia

## Chinese forces shadow PH navy ship near disputed shoal

**MANILA, Philippines** (AP)—A Philippine navy patrol ship was shadowed by Chinese forces near a disputed shoal in the South China Sea, sparking a fresh exchange of accusations and warnings between the Asian neighbors Tuesday.

Chinese and Philippine security officials gave conflicting accounts of Monday's encounter near Scarborough Shoal. China has surrounded the shoal with its navy and coast guard ships since a tense standoff with Philippine vessels more than a decade ago.

A rich fishing atoll and a safe mooring area during storms, Scarborough off the northwestern Philippines coast is one of most fiercely contested territories in the South China Sea, where Chinese and Philippine forces have faced off in recent months.

The frequent confrontations, which led to an Oct. 22 collision of Chinese and Philippine vessels near another disputed shoal, have prompted the United States to repeatedly renew a warning that it's obligated to defend the Philippines, its oldest treaty ally in Asia, if Filipino forces, ships or aircraft come under an armed attack in the Pacific, including in the South China Sea.

Chinese air force Col. Tian Junli, a spokesperson for the Southern Theater Command of the People's Liberation Army, said a Philippine warship trespassed into what he said were Chinese waters around Scarborough Shoal on Monday and was "tracked, monitored, warned and restricted" by the Chinese navy and air force for seriously violating "China's sovereignty and international law."

"We urge the Philippine side to immediately stop its infringement and provocation to avoid further escalation," he said in a statement. "The troops assigned to the PLA Southern Theater Command remain on high alert at all times to resolutely defend China's national sovereignty and security and peace and stability in the South China Sea."

Philippine National Security Adviser Eduardo Año, however, said in Manila that the Philippine navy ship carried out a routine patrol of the waters in the vicinity of Scarborough "without any untoward incident," but added that "Chinese vessels, as usual, conducted shadowing on the movement" of the Philippine navy ship.

Año accused China of hyping up the encounter and "creating unnecessary tensions between our two nations."

"The Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine coast guard will not be deterred by the aggressive and illegal activities" of China's navy, coast guard and militia forces, he added. "We will protect our territory and sovereign rights at all cost," Año said, citing the orders of Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to Filipino forces.

The territorial disputes in the South China Sea, which also involve Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei, have long been feared as an Asian flashpoint and have become a delicate fault line in the regional rivalry between the U.S. and China.

In Beijing on Tuesday, Singapore Defense Minister Ng Eng Hen underscored the importance of efforts to prevent conflicts from escalating, including by establishing defense hotlines.

Southeast Asian diplomats expressed concern over recent flare-ups of the disputes in the South China Sea in a new round of talks with their Chinese counterparts in Beijing last week, two regional diplomats told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the issue publicly.

During the talks on a proposed nonaggression pact, the Chinese and Philippine delegations had a "tense exchange" of renewed accusations over recent confrontations, one of the diplomats said.

The proposed pact aims to prevent occasional spats from degenerating into a major armed conflict, but the negotiations have been stymied by differences, including whether the agreement should be legally binding and what areas of the strategic sea passage it should cover.

## Singapore defense minister calls on China to take lead in reducing regional tensions

**BEIJING** (AP)—Singapore's defense minister urged China as a dominant power in Asia to take the lead in reducing tensions in the region, warning that a military conflict like the one in Ukraine or the Israel-Hamas war would be devastating for the continent and its future.

Speaking Tuesday on the third and final day of an annual defense conference held by China, Ng Eng Hen stressed the importance of military-to-military communication to manage crises, expressing hope that the United States and China would resume the use of their military hotline.

Peace is precarious and never a given anywhere in the world, Ng said. "What has happened in Europe and the Middle East must never occur here. ... We must do all we can to avoid it."

The Xiangshan Forum brought together defense officials from dozens of countries and organizations. China, which recently sacked its defense minister, was represented by Zhang Youxia, vice chairman of the Central Military Commission.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu used the forum to highlight Russia's deepening ties with China as it faces isolation from the West over its invasion of Ukraine.

Shoigu was given a military honor guard reception before a meeting with Zhang on Monday. The Russian Tass news agency quoted Zhang as saying that China is ready to respond with Russia to security threats and challenges and "jointly maintain global strategic balance and stability."

Ukraine's defense attaché took issue with the conference giving the floor to Shoigu and the defense minister of pro-Russia Belarus on Monday, followed by an Iranian official who defended Russia's invasion on Tuesday.

"There is only North Korea missing to see the full parade of evil," the attaché, Klymyshyn Petro, said during a question and answer session after a speech by Seyed Yahya Rahim Safavi, a senior adviser to Iran's leader.

Safavi described the invasion as a defensive reaction to U.S. and EU efforts to expand NATO to the Russian border, and said that Ukraine is paying a high price because the U.S. and NATO don't want to fight with Russia directly.

Ng, noting the territorial disputes in the South China Sea and the nuclear threat from North Korea, said it is vital for defense and military establishments to engage to reduce the risk of miscalculations and mishaps.

He applauded codes that have been adopted to manage unplanned military encounters at sea and said they should be expanded to include coast guards, which frequently face off in disputed waters.

The Philippines and China exchanged accusations and warnings Tuesday after China's navy and air force tracked a Philippine navy ship near Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea.

# World

## Israeli airstrikes crush apartment buildings in a Gaza refugee camp

AP

Palestinians inspect the damage of buildings destroyed by Israeli airstrikes on Jabaliya refugee camp on the outskirts of Gaza City, Tuesday, Oct. 31, 2023.

**KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip** (AP)—A barrage of Israeli airstrikes leveled apartment buildings in a refugee camp near Gaza City on Tuesday, with rescuers clawing through the destruction to pull men, women and children from the rubble. Israel said the strike, which targeted a senior Hamas military leader, destroyed a militant command center and an underground tunnel network.

**» As ground troops battle Hamas militants**

The toll from the attack in the Jabaliya camp was not immediately known. The director of the nearby hospital where casualties were taken, Dr. Atef Al-Kahlot, said hundreds of people were wounded or killed, but he did not provide exact figures.

The Israeli military said dozens of militants were killed, including a key Hamas commander for northern Gaza.

Israel aggressively defended the attack, with military spokesman Jonathan Conricus saying the targeted commander had also been a key planner of the bloody Oct. 7 rampage that started the war, and that the apartment buildings collapsed only because the vast underground Hamas complex had been destroyed.

Neither side's account could be independently confirmed.

Early Wednesday, the Palestinian telecoms company Paltel reported a "complete disruption" of internet and mobile phone services in Gaza, marking the second time in five days that Gaza residents were largely cut off from the world.

Communications were previously cut off late Friday until early Sunday, coinciding with the entry of large numbers of ground troops into Gaza as Israel said it was beginning a new stage in the war. Attempts to reach Gaza residents by phone were unsuccessful early Wednesday.

Humanitarian aid agencies have warned that such blackouts severely disrupt their work in an already dire situation in Gaza.

Several hundred thousand Palestinians remain in northern Gaza in the path of the ground assault. They have crowded into homes or are packed by the thousands into hospitals that are already overwhelmed with patients and running low on supplies.

The strike in Jabaliya underlined the anticipated surge in casualties on both sides as Israeli troops battling Hamas militants advance deeper into the northern Gaza Strip toward dense, residential neighborhoods. Israel has vowed to crush Hamas' ability to govern Gaza or threaten Israel following the Oct. 7 assault, which ignited the war. Hamas, an Islamic militant group, openly calls for the destruction of Israel.

## UN: More than 40% of Ukrainians need humanitarian help

**UNITED NATIONS** (AP)—Russian strikes are inflicting unimaginable suffering on the people of Ukraine and more than 40% of them need humanitarian assistance, a senior U.N. official told the U.N. Security Council on Tuesday.

Ramesh Rajasingham, director of coordination in the U.N. humanitarian office, said thousands of civilians have been killed in strikes on homes, schools, fields and markets since Russia's invasion in February 20022. The U.N. human rights office has formally verified 9,900 civilians killed, but he said "the actual number is certainly higher."

Ukrainian civilians are suffering "horrendous humanitarian consequences" and "unimaginable levels of suffering" from the Russian strikes, Rajasingham said. About 18 million Ukrainians—more than 40% of the population—need some form of humanitarian assistance, and as winter approaches "needs will be magnified," he said.

Rajasingham said significant damage and destruction of critical infrastructure continues to severely impact civilian access to electricity, heating, water and telecommunications, "a particular concern as winter fast approaches," which will put the elderly, disabled and displaced most at risk.

The Russian military methodically targeted Ukraine's power stations and other critical infrastructure with missile and drone strikes during the last winter season, resulting in frequent power outages.

To prepare for the freezing temperatures this winter, the U.N. official said, the humanitarian community is helping people carrying out household repairs and ensuring that water and heating systems are functional.

"The aim is to ensure that every civilian has access to somewhere both safe and warm during the winter ahead," Rajasingham said.

# Environment

### EVEN WITH CARBON EMISSIONS CUTS

## Key part of Antarctica is doomed to slow collapse, study says

By SETH BORENSTEIN
AP Science Writer

MICHAEL SHORTT

This undated image provided by British Antarctic Survey, shows the North Cove, in Antarctic.

No matter how much the world cuts back on carbon emissions, a key and sizable chunk of Antarctica is essentially doomed to an "unavoidable" melt, a new study found.

Though the full melt will take hundreds of years, slowly adding nearly 6 feet (1.8 meters) to sea levels, it will be enough to reshape where and how people live in the future, the study's lead author said.

Researchers used computer simulations to calculate future melting of protective ice shelves jutting over Antarctica's Amundsen Sea in western Antarctica. The study in Monday's journal Nature Climate Change found even if future warming was limited to just a few tenths of a degree more—an international goal that many scientists say is unlikely to be met—it would have "limited power to prevent ocean warming that could lead to the collapse of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet."

"Our main question here was: How much control do we still have over ice shelf melting? How much melting can still be prevented by reducing emissions?" said study lead author Kaitlin Naughten, an oceanographer at the British Antarctic Survey. "Unfortunately, it's not great news. Our simulations suggest that we are now committed to the rapid increase in the rate of ocean warming and ice shelf melting over the rest of the century."

While past studies have talked about how dire the situation is, Naughten was the first to use computer simulations to study the key melting component of warm water melting ice from below, and the work looked at four different scenarios for how much carbon dioxide the world pumps into the atmosphere. In each case, ocean warming was just too much for this section of the ice sheet to survive, the study found.

Naughten looked at melting gatekeeper ice shelves, which float over the ocean in this area of Antarctica that is already below sea level. Once these ice shelves melt, there's nothing to stop the glaciers behind them from flowing into the sea.

Naughten specifically looked at what would happen if somehow future warming was limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) over mid-19th century levels — the international goal — and found the runaway melting process anyway. The world has already warmed about 1.2 degrees Celsius (nearly 2.2 degrees Fahrenheit) since pre-industrial times and much of this summer temporarily shot past the 1.5 mark.

Naughten's study concentrated on the part of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet that is most at risk from melting from below, near the Amundsen Sea. It includes the massive Thwaites ice shelf that is melting so fast it got the nickname "the Doomsday Glacier." West Antarctica is only one-tenth of the southern continent but is more unstable than the larger eastern side.

That part of Antarctica "is doomed," said University of California Irvine ice scientist Eric Rignot, who wasn't part of the study. "The damage has already been done."

University of Colorado ice scientist Ted Scambos, who also wasn't part of the study, said this ice sheet "eventually is going to collapse. It's not a happy conclusion and it is one that I'm only saying reluctantly."

Naughten doesn't like to use the word "doomed," because she said 100 years from now the world might not just stop but reverse carbon levels in the air and global warming. But she said what's happening now on the ground is a slow collapse that can't be stopped, at least not in this century.

"I think it's unavoidable that some of this area is lost. It's unavoidable that the problem gets worse," Naughten told The Associated Press. "It isn't unavoidable that we lose all of it because sea level rise happens over the very long term. I only looked in this study up to 2100. So after 2100, we probably have some control still."

No matter what words are used, Naughten said she and other scientists studying the area in previous research conclude that this part of Antarctica "couldn't be saved or a lot of it couldn't be saved."

Naughten's study did not calculate how much ice would be lost, how much sea level would rise and at what speed. But she estimated that the amount of ice in the area most at risk if it all melted would raise sea levels by about 1.8 meters (5.9 feet).

However, she said, that is a slow process that would play out through the next few hundred years through the 2300s, 2400s and 2500s.

Naughten said that may seem like a long way away, but noted that if the Victorians of the 1800s had done something to drastically change the shape of our world, we would not look well on them.

This type of sea level rise would be "absolutely devastating" if it happened over 200 years, but if it could be stretched out over 2,000 years, humanity could adapt, Naughten said.

"Coastal communities will either have to build around or be abandoned," Naughten said.

While this part of Antarctica's ice sheet is destined to be lost, other vulnerable sections of Earth's environment can still be saved by reducing heat-trapping emissions so there is reason to still cut back on carbon pollution, Naughten said.

Twila Moon, deputy chief scientist at the National Snow and Ice Data Center who wasn't part of the research, said she worries that most people will see nothing but doom and gloom in the research.

"I don't see a lot of hope," Naughten said. "But it's what the science tells me. So that's what I have to communicate to the world."

Naughten quoted former NASA scientist Kate Marvel, saying "when it comes to climate change we need courage and not hope. Courage is the resolve to do well without the assurance of a happy ending."

## UN chief visits tallest mountains in Nepal and expresses alarm over melting glaciers

**KATHMANDU, Nepal** (AP) —The U.N. chief said Tuesday after touring the highest peaks in Nepal that the world should end the fossil fuel age to curb what he says is a devastating level of melting of glaciers in the Himalayan mountains due to global warming.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres addressed Nepal's parliament after flying past Mount Everest, the world's highest peak, on Monday and touring the base camp of Mount Annapurna, the world's 10th highest, on Tuesday.

"Glaciers are melting at records. I was a witness," Guterres said in his address. "The effect is devastating. Swollen lakes bursting, rivers and seas rising, cultures threatened. And mountainsides exposed, inflaming the risk of rock slides, landslides and avalanche."

Guterres visited towns including Pokhara where where trekkers begin journeys in the Mount Annapurna region, and met with local groups to discuss environmental issues, including protecting the Himalayan glaciers that provide fresh water to over a billion people.

"I am here today to cry out from the rooftop of the world: Stop the madness," Guterres said. "The glaciers are retreating, but we cannot," he said. "We must end the fossil fuel age."

A report earlier this year by the Nepal-based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development said that Himalayan glaciers could lose up to 80% of their glaciers if the earth warms by 4 degrees Celsius in coming decades or centuries.

YUNISH GURUNG

U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres visits Annapurna base camp, around 3,230 metres (10,600 feet) above sea level in Nepal, Tuesday, Oct. 31, 2023.

Guterres urged countries to stick to commitments under the 2015 Paris climate conference to control carbon emissions to keep warming down to 1.5 degrees (2.7 degrees F).

"We must act now to protect people on the frontline. And to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius," Guterres said.

Scientists warn that flash floods and avalanches could become more likely in coming years, in part due to climate change.

Guterres also appealed to the international community to donate funding to help build resilience in affected communities.

# Life & Style

## Robert De Niro lashes out at former assistant who sued him

**NEW YORK** (AP)—Actor Robert De Niro shouted "Shame on you!" as he testified Tuesday in a New York courtroom, directing the comments toward his former executive assistant and vice president who seeks millions of dollars after accusing her onetime boss of being abusive.

Graham Chase Robinson watched with her lawyers while De Niro's anger built as attorney Andrew Macurdy pelted him with some tabloid-style accusations his client made about De Niro's behavior toward Robinson as she served his needs, large and small, from 2008 until several months into 2019.

Robinson, 41, seeks $12 million in damages for emotional distress and reputational harm that she claims has left her jobless and unable to recover from the trauma of working for De Niro. She was making $300,000 annually when she quit, frustrated by her interactions with De Niro's girlfriend and the effect she believed the girlfriend was having on the actor.

The jury is also considering evidence pertaining to a lawsuit De Niro filed against Robinson in which he claimed that she stole things from him, including 5 million points that could be used for airline flights. De Niro is seeking the return of three years of Robinson's salary.

Macurdy asked De Niro whether it was true that he sometimes urinated as he spoke with Robinson on the telephone.

"That's nonsense," De Niro answered. "You got us all here for this?"

Macurdy told De Niro he called Robinson "b—— to her face."

"I was never abusive, ever," the actor snapped back, though he conceded that he might have used the word in conversations with her.

And the claim that he told Robinson he preferred that she scratch his back rather than using a back scratching device drew another angry rebuke from De Niro, who said it might have happened once or twice, but "never was with disrespect or lewdness."

Finally, he angrily looked toward Robinson and shouted: "Shame on you, Chase Robinson!"

Quickly, he blurted an apology in a quieter voice, as he glanced toward Judge Lewis J. Liman.

The actor admitted that there were no written rules for those who worked for him because, he said, he relied on the "rules of common sense." He said he promoted Robinson with the title of vice president of his company, Canal Productions, at her request but he added that her duties didn't change.

At times, De Niro would flatly deny something, only to later admit that there might be truth to it in a manner different than how it was suggested.

Asked if he once yelled at Robinson when she was in Europe and had failed to call and remind him of an important meeting in California, De Niro answered that he hadn't, only to quickly add: "I raised my voice."

"I got angry that one time," he said. "I berated her. I wasn't abusive. I was upset."

"You called her a brat," Macurdy said.

"I could have," De Niro answered.

Sometimes, De Niro sounded like he wanted to leave the witness stand.

"I don't have time for this," he said at one point.

He rejected Macurdy's suggestion that he sued Robinson before she sued him because he wanted publicity.

"It draws attention to me. It's the last thing I wanted to do," De Niro said.

De Niro, 80, has won two Oscars in a six-decade movie career that has featured memorable roles in films including "The Deer Hunter" and "Raging Bull." Currently, he is in Martin Scorsese's "Killers of the Flower Moon."

## Philadelphia picks winning design for Harriet Tubman statue

AP

Mayor of Philadelphia Jim Kenney poses for a photo with Alvin Pettit, artist of the winning sculpture of Harriet Tubman that was unveiled on Monday, Oct. 30, 2023, at Philadelphia City Hall in Philadelphia.

**PHILADELPHIA** (AP)—The city of Philadelphia has picked the winning design for a Harriet Tubman statue outside City Hall after facing criticism over its original choice of a white artist who'd been selected without competition.

Alvin Pettit beat out four other semifinalists with a design called "A Higher Power: The Call of a Freedom Fighter." His nearly 14-foot bronze statue—the first of a Black woman who is a historical figure in the city's public art collection—will portray Tubman as a military leader and freedom fighter.

The famed abolitionist—who escaped slavery and led other enslaved Black women and men to freedom on the Underground Railroad—worked as a scout, spy and nurse for the Union Army during the Civil War, and helped lead 150 Black soldiers on a gunboat raid in South Carolina.

"She is shown in majestic prayer. Perhaps she is calling upon her faith or contemplating a battle," said Pettit, a Baltimore-bred artist based in Jersey City, New Jersey, at a news conference Monday as a clay model of the forthcoming sculpture was unveiled at City Hall.

"This woman was a soldier, a scout, a union spy, a military strategist, and a war hero," he said. "Therefore I captured a moment in time that shows her as a conqueror."

Last year, Philadelphia city officials offered the commission to another artist, Wesley Wofford, a white sculptor from North Carolina. The city contacted Wofford after a traveling version of his 2017 statue of Tubman appeared at City Hall. A group of artists and activists protested, saying the city should have held an open competition to give a chance to other artists, including Black artists—especially since it was for a piece of public art.

"As an artist, it's hurtful and it is traumatizing," Dee Jones, a textile artist, told city officials and Wofford during a community meeting in June 2022, The Philadelphia Inquirer reported. "If it was an open call, and Wesley was chosen, it would be fine. But because the process wasn't open, that's the big issue."

Wofford ultimately dropped out, and the city's Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy, known as Creative Philly, issued an open call in August 2022 that attracted dozens of submissions.

After the finalists were chosen, the public got a chance to weigh in. City officials and the city's African American Statue Advisory Committee, which included members of Tubman's family, made the final selection.

Previously, Pettit has made monumental sculptures celebrating other historic Black figures, including educator and philanthropist Mary McLeod Bethune and iconic singer Marian Anderson.

Pettit's small-scale mockup shows Tubman with her hands folded in prayer and a rifle slung over her back. Leaning forward, she stands on a pile of broken shackles with a pistol tucked in her waistband and the edge of the Confederate flag visible underneath her foot.

## Holidays become less fun with the in-laws around

**DEAR ABBY:** My daughter's in-laws have no place to go on holidays. They have two children, but haven't spoken to one of them in several years, so my son-in-law is their only family close by.

I enjoy entertaining and having family over, but I really don't care for their company. It's a different vibe when they're here because her father-in-law, "Sam," and my husband drink too much and talk politics (both activities I avoid). They know how I feel, but make comments behind my back, thinking I don't hear them.

My husband loves their company and goes out often with my son-in-law and Sam. My daughter understands how I feel. She doesn't like to cook or entertain, but will host a holiday once in a while. However, it doesn't solve the problem, because I end up doing a lot of the work and I miss not entertaining in my own home. Please advise.

CATCH-22 IN NEW YORK

**DEAR CATCH-22: I'm not sure why you feel it's your responsibility to entertain your daughter's in-laws on every holiday. Discuss this with your husband (when he's sober) and tell him you don't like it when he and Sam get drunk, talk politics and make snide remarks behind your back. Inform him he should be more respectful, or the in-laws won't be invited to your home for the holidays anymore.**

**Nowhere in your letter did you mention your daughter's MOTHER-in-law. Do you have anything in common with her? If so, spend most of your time with her and your daughter or, once the meal has been served, ask them if they'd like to go out to a movie, get some exercise, etc. That way you won't be forced to stick around when the "boys" overimbibe and indulge themselves in their favorite subject.**

■■■

**DEAR ABBY:** Recently, my current husband went on a fishing trip with my brother. My brother was drinking and confided to him that my ex-husband cheated on me. My brother was present when it happened. I was shocked, to say the least. I felt so betrayed by both. I can't believe my brother would keep this secret from me, but my ex-husband has some dirt on my brother as well.

I sent my brother a text telling him how upset I am about his having kept that secret from me. Had I known the truth, it could have changed my life in so many ways. He wants to talk about it with me, but I'm not interested in doing that right now. I don't know if I can get past this. Can you advise if I'm doing the right thing?

BETRAYED IN CALIFORNIA

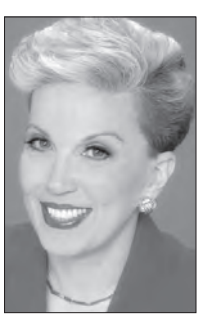
**DEAR BETRAYED: I understand why you are furious. And it might be better if you don't discuss this with your brother until you have had a chance to cool down. While it's logical that you might not be able to trust your brother again, I do think that at some point, you should hear him out. Once you have done that, you will be in a better position to decide whether you want to have a relationship.**

■■■

*To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)*

### DEAR ABBY

**By Abigail Van Buren**
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

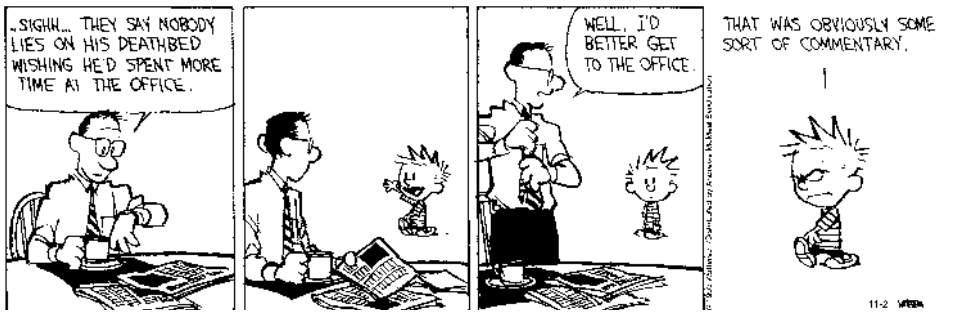


*Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.*

# Pastimes

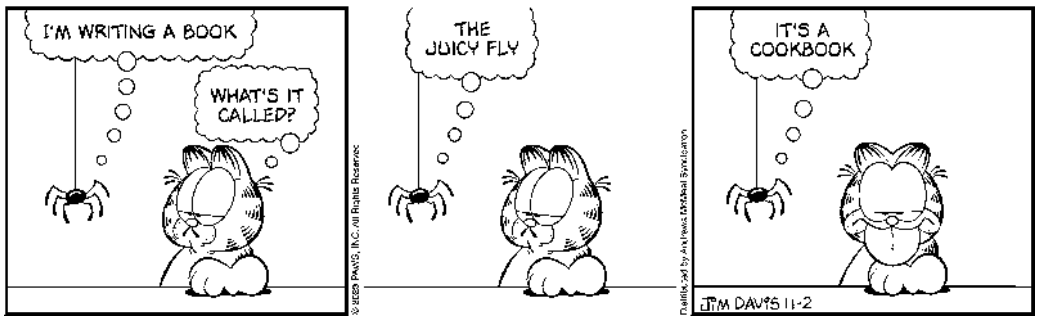
## Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


..SIGHH... THEY SAY NOBODY LIES ON HIS DEATHBED WISHING HE'D SPENT MORE TIME AT THE OFFICE.
WELL, I'D BETTER GET TO THE OFFICE.
THAT WAS OBVIOUSLY SOME SORT OF COMMENTARY.
11-2

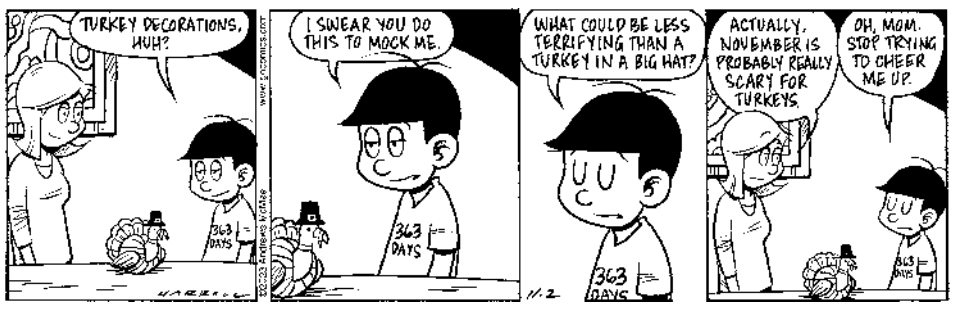
## Garfield®

By Jim Davis




## Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


TURKEY DECORATIONS, HUH?
I SWEAR YOU DO THIS TO MOCK ME.
WHAT COULD BE LESS TERRIFYING THAN A TURKEY IN A BIG HAT?
ACTUALLY, NOVEMBER IS PROBABLY REALLY SCARY FOR TURKEYS.
OH, MOM. STOP TRYING TO CHEER ME UP.
363 DAYS
11.2

## The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

HOW GOES THE NEW CREATIVE ENDEAVOR?
WRITING A HEAVY METAL ANTHEM IS HARDER THAN I THOUGHT.
TRYING TO FIGURE OUT THE RIGHT BASS RHYTHM?
NO, COMING UP WITH A PHRASE THAT RHYMES WITH "SATAN'S ARMPIT!"

## CROSSWORD

*By Eugene Sheffer*

**ACROSS**
1 Carrots' mates
5 NASCAR advertiser
8 Herring's kin
12 Ticklish Muppet
13 Luau bowlful
14 Carton sealer
15 Actor Hemsworth
16 LBJ's successor
17 Checks out
18 Japanese mat
20 High cards
22 Gilbert & Sullivan offering
26 Barbecue site
29 Author Fleming
30 Long time
31 Water, to Juan
32 Connections
33 Tennis score
34 Sawbuck
35 "Life of Pi" director Lee
36 Supermarket section
37 Led Zeppelin's genre
40 "— Lisa"
41 Holiday Inn rival
45 Yuletide tune
47 Eastern "way"
49 Redact
50 Piece of hardware
51 Right angle
52 iPod type
53 Barracks beds
54 Pitcher Maglie
55 Fed. agents

**DOWN**
1 Hide
2 Director Kazan
3 Latin 101 word
4 Neighbor of Kenya
5 Parsley piece
6 Male turkey
7 Toy-filled targets
8 Precipitous
9 Rubes
10 Chest-beating beast
11 — Moines
19 "O Sole —"
21 Record holder?
23 Door piece
24 Stir up
25 Green Gables girl
26 Walkway
27 Screenwriter James
28 Cheese-topped diner order
32 Prisoners
33 Clinic concern
35 Writer Rand
36 Small battery
38 Battery measures
39 Blogger's bane
42 Cain's dad
43 Eat in style
44 Like — of bricks
45 "The Wall" network
46 Tic-tac-toe win
48 Carte lead-in

**Solution time: 24 mins.**

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| P | H | I | M | E | M | I | N | I | S | I | E | R |
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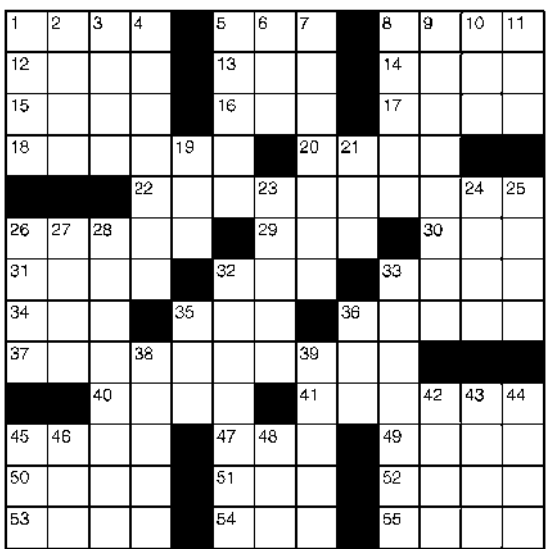
Yesterday's answer 11-2



**STUMPED?** For answers lo today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18÷ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

**CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY:** Marisol Nichols, 50; David Schwimmer, 57; k.d. lang, 62; Stefanie Powers, 81.

**Happy Birthday:** Pay it forward. The more you are willing to do, the more you'll get back. Live in the moment, embrace change and enjoy the ride. It's time to exercise knowledge, experience and ingenuity to reach your objective. Take the steps necessary to ensure you fulfill your expectations and reach the pinnacle of your aspirations. Explore your options and exercise your rights. Your numbers are 9, 14, 23, 28, 34, 38, 46.

**ARIES** *(March 21- April 19):* Handle others with care. You will not get what you want if you aren't sensitive to their needs. Someone will use manipulative tactics to take advantage of your enthusiasm and to steal your concepts. Pay attention; perceptiveness is necessary. ✪✪

**TAURUS** *(April 20-May 20):* Align yourself with friends and family. Share your thoughts and feelings, and you'll get meaningful feedback. An unexpected opportunity will give you something to consider. A physical change will boost your ego and give you the confidence to do your own thing. ✪✪✪✪

**GEMINI** *(May 21-June 20):* Don't judge others, or you'll face similar circumstances. Bide your time, do your best to keep the peace and don't make impossible promises. Say less, do more and eliminate an awkward or vulnerable situation. The truth will determine your destiny. ✪✪✪

**CANCER** *(June 21-July 22):* Let your imagination run wild and your ideas infiltrate your plans today. How you relate to others and your insight will increase your profile and turn you into the go-to person. Your compassion will change how others feel about you. ✪✪✪

**LEO** *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Collect your thoughts and micromanage your plan. There is no room for error or sloppy presentations. If you don't have everything in order, you are better off aborting your plan. You can expect to face opposition if you want to change or control situations. ✪✪✪

**VIRGO** *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Don't be shy; call the shots and make things happen. Speak up and share your intentions, and the input you receive will help you strategize your next move. You have everything to gain if you believe in yourself and are willing to act fast. ✪✪✪✪

**LIBRA** *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Refuse to let anyone play with your emotions. Set high standards and make your position clear. If you give someone the upper hand, they will take advantage of you. Protect your home, heart and reputation. Use charm as a means of persuasion. ✪✪

**SCORPIO** *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Talk to experts, get the lowdown and develop a strategy that promotes what you want to explore. The option to work alongside someone who understands your vision will up the ante and encourage you to go above and beyond the call of duty. ✪✪✪✪✪

**SAGITTARIUS** *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Pay attention to cash flow. It's OK to help others, but don't leave yourself short. Think outside the box to devise a plan that will lower your overhead. Invest time and money in keeping your skills and knowledge marketable with trends. ✪✪✪

## EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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**CAPRICORN** *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* A positive change is within reach. Consider what's important to you and how much you can achieve. Take control, and bring about changes that offer significant opportunities to use your skills and experience to improve your lifestyle, meaningful relationships and emotional well-being. ✪✪✪

**AQUARIUS** *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Focus on learning, self-improvement and opportunities that align with your dreams. Put a plan and timeline in place, and don't stop until you reach your goal. Refuse to let temptation or what others choose to do stand between you and your objective. ✪✪✪

**PISCES** *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Plan to have fun. Socialize, participate in an event, attend a reunion or invest time and money in yourself. Don't wait for things to come to you; create opportunities that give you hope for a better future. Turn your attributes into a lucrative lifestyle. ✪✪✪✪✪

**Birthday Baby:** You are mysterious, engaging and unprecedented. You are disciplined and courageous.

*✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.*

# SUDOKU

**Conceptis Sudoku** *By Dave Green*

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 6 | | 9 | | | | | |
| | | | | 6 | 7 | 3 | | 5 |
| | | 2 | | | | 4 | | |
| | 8 | | | 7 | | | | 3 |
| | | | | | | 8 | 5 | 4 |
| | | | 5 | | 4 | | | |
| | 5 | 1 | | | 8 | | | |
| | | | | 3 | | | | |
| 8 | 2 | | 4 | | | 5 | 7 | |

Difficulty: ★★★ 11/2

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

**Yesterday's Answer**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 | 6 |
| 9 | 8 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| 1 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 4 | 8 | 5 | 7 |
| 2 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 8 |
| 4 | 6 | 8 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 5 | 7 | 2 |
| 5 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 1 |
| 3 | 5 | 2 | 7 | 8 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 9 |
| 8 | 7 | 4 | 9 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 5 |
| 6 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 3 |

Difficulty: ★★★ 11/1

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## WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

**HOW TO PLAY:** All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

**YUMA TERRITORIAL PRISON** **Solution: 12 letters**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | R | A | I | N | O | G | A | M | S | E | R | O | L | F |
| C | L | L | I | B | U | R | T | R | A | H | J | O | H | N |
| I | E | O | Y | U | R | R | R | E | E | N | O | I | P | E |
| V | W | C | U | C | O | J | E | M | Ⓢ | G | S | E | A | K |
| N | I | K | C | K | B | A | E | Ⓦ | U | T | D | C | D | A |
| O | S | S | L | S | B | I | Ⓐ | I | O | D | N | N | E | L |
| C | E | E | I | K | E | Ⓛ | L | R | L | T | E | E | T | F |
| R | T | C | S | I | R | T | I | O | O | S | G | P | N | J |
| A | E | N | A | N | Y | C | G | S | M | U | E | S | U | M |
| R | P | E | L | F | D | A | R | K | C | E | L | L | A | A |
| I | E | D | D | R | G | E | E | G | S | H | S | S | H | I |
| Z | A | I | O | A | G | Y | U | G | I | R | O | N | I | L |
| O | R | V | T | N | S | A | G | N | S | K | O | O | B | L |
| N | L | E | A | K | R | I | Y | E | L | H | S | A | L | I |
| A | G | R | O | D | R | A | C | I | R | E | T | L | A | W |

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Arizona, Bill, Books, Buckskin Frank, Burt, Convict, Dark Cell, Evidence, Flores Magon, Gate, Gold, Guard, Guilty, Hart, Haunted, Historic, Iron, Jail, John, Keys, Lashley, Laws, Legends, Leslie, Lewis, Lisaldo, Locks, Museum, Pearl, Pete, Pioneer, Rangers, Ricardo, Riggs, Robbery, School, Spence, Tower, Train, Walter, William J. Flake

**Yesterday's Answer: Offerings**

The NEW **Treasuries 55 & 56** can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480. (In Canada, call 1-866-232-2067)

# Semien, Seager push Rangers over D-backs for 3-1 World Series lead

**PHOENIX** (AP)—Adolis García gathered Texas Rangers hitters in a clubhouse side room Tuesday afternoon and told them his World Series was over.

Max Scherzer was finished, too, injuries costing the American League champions their top slugger and potential Game 7 starting pitcher.

"Pull together guys. Let's finish it!" Travis Jankowski recalled García saying.

Rangers batters not only bonded, they whipped through the Arizona Diamondbacks like a desert storm.

Marcus Semien's two-run triple and three-run homer powered Texas to a 10-run lead by the third inning, Corey Seager hit another long home run and the Rangers won 11-7 to move ahead three games to one in the World Series.

"That took a lot of guts for him to come out there and speak," Seager said of García. "He was vulnerable. He wants to be out there. He told us he loved us."

Texas improved to a record 10-0 on the road this postseason and closed within one win of the first title in the 63-season history of a franchise that started as the expansion Washington Senators in 1961.

Nathan Eovaldi tries to clinch the third all-wild card Series on Wednesday night against Zac Gallen in a rematch of Game 1 starters.

"We've got our top guy on the mound now," Semien said. "He's a guy who's been waiting for this moment the entire year."

Forty-two of 49 previous teams to take 3-1 leads have gone on to win the World Series. The most recent club to overcome a 3-1 deficit was the Chicago Cubs against Cleveland in 2016.

Rangers batters built a 10-0 cushion by becoming the first team in Series history with consecutive five-run innings. Seager's third two-run homer of the Series capped the second, Semien's drive punctuated the third and Jonah Heim added an eighth-inning shot.

Texas scored its first 10 runs with two outs, battering an Arizona staff that needed four pitchers to get its first eight outs. Miguel Castro's wild pitch brought home the first run, and an error by Gold Glove first baseman Christian Walker—the first by either team in the Series—led to five unearned runs in the third.

"This was nothing that we saw coming," Diamondbacks manager Torey Lovullo said. "It all came unraveled on us there in a matter of two innings."

Seager and Semien, All-Star middle infielders signed as free agents for $500 million combined before the 2022 season, have six RBIs each in the Series. Seager, the first shortstop with three Series homers, has four long balls in his last five games dating to the AL Championship Series. After leading the Los Angeles Dodgers to the 2020 title, he could join Sandy Koufax, Bob Gibson and Reggie Jackson as the only two-time World Series MVPs.

Jankowski, replacing García in right field, singled in the second and hit a two-run double in the third in his first Series at-bats.

"I was locked in last night waiting, preparing to start. I didn't get the official news until 2 o'clock today," Jankowski said. "Shoot, I've been ready to go 15 years ago."

Andrew Heaney, a 32-year-old lefty with his fifth big league team, earned the win by allowing four hits in five innings. Six relievers followed, with closer José Leclerc getting the final out.

"We had a 10-run lead. It's a lot easier to go out there, attack the strike zone and not feel so confined to having to make perfect pitches," Heaney said.

There was a festive mood at Chase Field, where the roof was open for the second straight night and some fans arrived in Halloween costumes.

Josh Jung doubled off opener Joe Mantiply leading off the second and in came Castro, who gave up García's winning homer in the 11th inning of Game 1. Jung advanced on a groundout and put Texas ahead when Castro bounced a changeup off the plate for a wild pitch.

Semien hooked a slider that landed about 18 inches fair and bounced into the left-field corner for a two-run triple and a 3-0 lead.

"Looking for the outside corner. It didn't do what I want to do. It just kind of stayed in the zone there," Castro said through a translator.

Seager hit Kyle Nelson's slider 431 feet off a video board above the right-center wall for his sixth postseason homer.

"Made a mistake to the wrong hitter," Nelson said. "The plan was to carefully pitch around him."

In the first World Series to open with three errorless games, Arizona's defense cracked at an inopportune time. After singles by Jung and Nathaniel Lowe with one out in the third, Luis Frías relieved and Heim hit a sharp grounder to Walker, who had a chance for a double play but dropped the ball on the transfer as he looked to throw to second.

Jankowski doubled and Semien sent a fastball at the letters over the left-field wall for his first homer since Sept. 27.

"I hadn't jogged around the bases in a while," Semien said.

Heim had been 0 for 12 before his homer against Ryne Nelson.Rangers players gathered with their families at the team hotel at 10 a.m. About two dozen children were in costume, with Jankowski's two sons and daughter dressed as a falcon, Spider-Man and Bingo from "Bluey."

"I'm sure they're all sugared up now, which is great," Jankowski said after the game, breaking into a wide smile.

Lourdes Gurriel Jr. hit a sacrifice fly in the fourth for Arizona and a three-run homer in the eighth against Chris Stratton. Tommy Pham had a sacrifice fly in the eighth, and Gabriel Moreno delivered a two-run single in the ninth.

Arizona's Ketel Marte had two hits, extending his record postseason hitting streak to 20 games.

AP

Texas Rangers' Marcus Semien, right, celebrates his three-run home run with Jonah Heim during the third inning in Game 4 of the baseball World Series against the Arizona Diamondbacks Tuesday, Oct. 31, 2023, in Phoenix.

## Rangers slugger García, pitcher Scherzer to miss rest of World Series

**PHOENIX** (AP)—Texas Rangers slugger Adolis García and pitcher Max Scherzer will miss the rest of the World Series after getting hurt in Game 3 against the Arizona Diamondbacks.

García, the AL Championship Series MVP, has a moderate strain of his left oblique. Scherzer, who had been in line to pitch a possible Game 7, has a muscle spasm on the right side of his back.

They were replaced on the active roster by infielder/outfielder Ezequiel Durán and left-hander Brock Burke before the Rangers won 11-7 on Tuesday night to take a 3-1 World Series lead.

"They've worked their entire lives to be on this stage and be in this moment and they've both suffered injuries that are going to take them out of that," Rangers general manager Chris Young said. "I have great empathy for them in terms of that."

García grabbed his left side while coming out of the batter's box on his flyout against Luis Frías in the eighth inning Monday.

"Adolis did everything he could today," Young said. "He came in, was the first guy in today. He got as much treatment as possible. He went down to the cage and gave it a go, and it was very clear he was in pain. It's not something that's going to get any better over the next five to seven days. I think it would be a more significant timeline if this were the regular season. Made the decision pretty easy."

García hit .323 in the postseason with eight homers and a major league-record 22 RBIs, one more than David Freese had for the 2011 St. Louis Cardinals. García was 3 for 10 in the World Series with two RBIs, including an 11th-inning home run off Miguel Castro that gave Texas a 6-5 win in Friday's opener. He also threw out Christian Walker at the plate from right field in Game 3.

The two-time All-Star batted .357 with five homers and 15 RBIs in the ALCS against Houston, a big league record for RBIs in one postseason series. He homered in five straight games, tied for the second-longest streak in postseason history, before going 0 for 3 with a walk in Game 2 of the World Series.

Travis Jankowski started in right field and was in the No. 9 slot in the batting order. He singled and scored in the second and hit a two-run double in the third in his first Series at-bats.

Jankowski hit .263 with one homer and 30 RBIs in his first season with the Rangers.

"Travis has had a really nice year for us in his role," manager Bruce Bochy said. "Got pressed into a starting role there for a while when we had our injuries and really picked us up when we needed it. Solid all around. Smart player. Good defender. Speed. He's a guy that can handle the bat. He can bunt. He does a good job putting the ball in play."

Mitch Garver moved from fifth to third in the order, where García had been. Josh Jung moved from eighth to fifth, and Nathaniel Lowe moved from seventh to sixth, flipping with Jung. Leody Taveras moved up to eighth.

Durán last played on Sept. 29. Burke, appearing for the first time since Game 2 of the Division Series on Oct. 8, was charged with three runs in the eighth.

Scherzer left Game 3 after three innings. Asked after the game whether he was taking a muscle relaxant or something stronger, Scherzer responded: "All of the above."

"He received a full day of treatment and there was no progress," Young said. "Our medical team has extreme concern in terms of his ability to recover over the next few days."

Acquired from the New York Mets on July 30, Scherzer strained a muscle in his right shoulder on Sept. 12 and returned to make two starts in the ALCS against Houston, going 0-1 with a 9.45 ERA. He allowed five runs over four innings and took the loss in Game 3, then gave up two runs over 2 2/3 innings in a no-decision in Game 7.

He was pitching Monday with a cut on his right thumb covered with cotton and Super Glue, what he termed Sunday as "a little arts and crafts in the training room."

Scherzer is 1-0 with a 3.72 ERA in four World Series starts, getting a no-decision for Detroit against San Francisco in Game 4 in 2012, winning the 2019 opener for Washington at Houston and getting a no-decision in the Game 7 win that year after getting scratched from a scheduled Game 5 start because of an irritated nerve near his neck.

"He's honest, he's open and he's authentic," Young said. "He gives us as much information as he possibly can provide, and wants us to make the best decision. But he doesn't fight once the decision's made. He understands that we try to do what's best for the team. He understood completely."

# Johnson's late basket gives Spurs only lead of game in win over Suns

**PHOENIX** (AP)—Keldon Johnson stripped Kevin Durant and made a contested layup with 1.2 seconds left to give the Spurs their only lead of the game and a 115-114 victory over the stunned Phoenix Suns on Tuesday night.

The Spurs, who trailed by as many as 20 points, broke a nine-game losing streak against Phoenix.

Johnson had 27 points to lead San Antonio, which outscored the Suns 33-19 in the fourth quarter. The Spurs were coming off a 40-point loss to the Clippers on Sunday in Los Angeles.

After rookie Victor Wembanyama's dunk cut the lead to one, the Spurs trapped Durant in the corner.

"I went for a steal (earlier) and I saw Tre (Jones) had him in the corner and I was just like, the worst that happens is they call a foul," Johnson said. "We had to make something happen.

"We kept fighting, stay together regardless of what's going on. Try to correct our mistakes."

Suns coach Frank Vogel saw the decisive play differently.

"They fouled him, the refs didn't call it," Vogel said. "They whacked him on the arm before the ball gets ripped out of his hands. No call. In a situation like that, we try to get a quick inbounds to our 90% free-throw shooter, and we did."

Playing in his fourth NBA game, top draft pick Wembanyama missed his first five shots before throwing down a sensational dunk in the final seconds of the first half. He scored 18 points and had a team-high eight rebounds in 28 minutes. Devin Vassell also had 18 for the Spurs.

"They responded great," Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said, referring to the blowout in the previous game. "They kept playing through it. We made a gazillion mistakes, but it's a game of mistakes. We kept playing and that's the best thing. I was really proud of them."

Durant led Phoenix with 26 points. Eric Gordon scored 20, Grayson Allen had 19 on 5 of 7 shooting from 3-point range for the Suns, who played without injured starting guards Bradley Beal and Devin Booker.

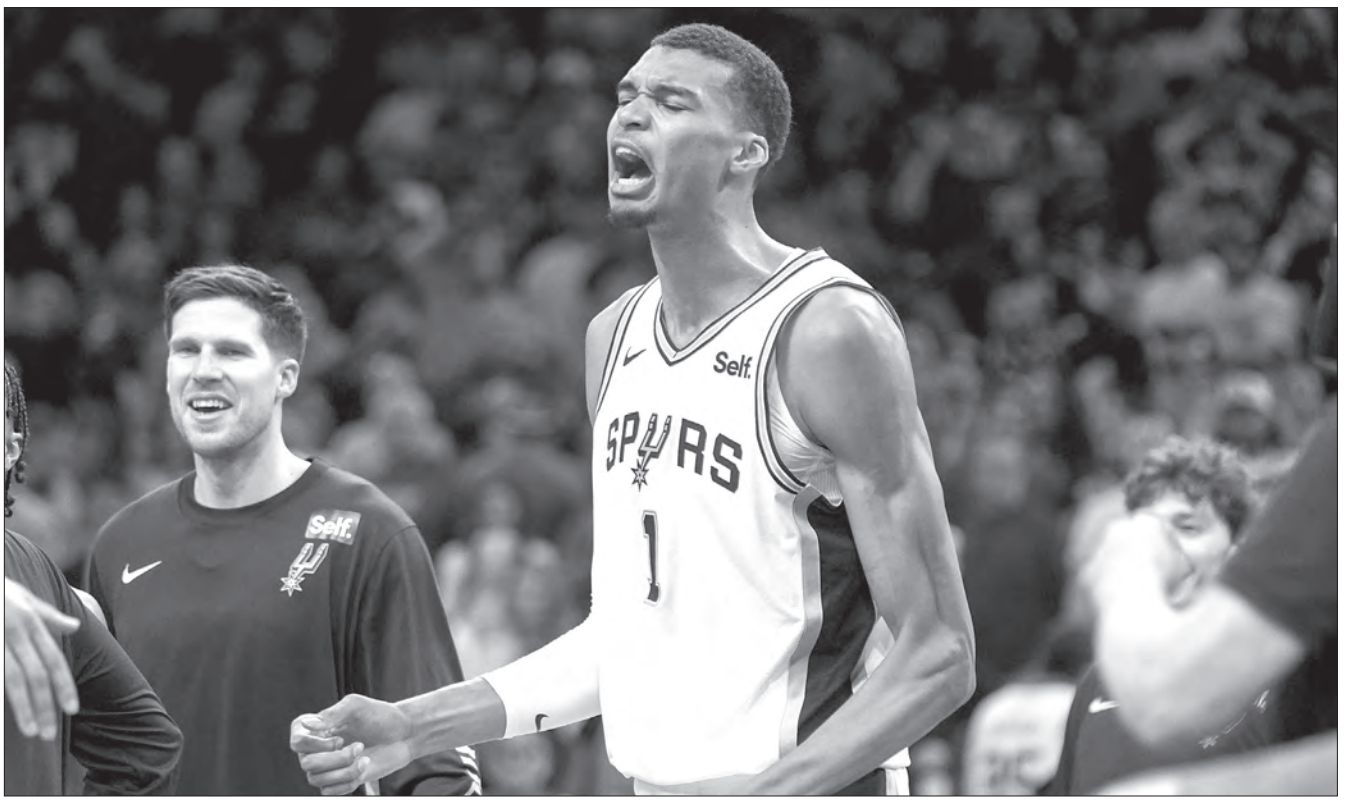
Jusuf Nurkic had a game-high 12 rebounds for Phoenix, which scored the game's first eight points.

Popovich called a timeout 53 seconds into the game after Durant's fastbreak dunk made it 4-0. It didn't help much as Phoenix went on to lead 27-18 at the end of the quarter. Durant had 10 points in the period, finishing with a step-back jumper as time was running out. The Spurs shot 29% from the field in the quarter and made just 1 of 11 from 3-point range.

Phoenix led 63-45 at halftime and 95-82 after three quarters before the Spurs rallied.

Before the game, Vogel said "there's no timetable" for the return of Booker (left ankle sprain) and Bradley Beal (low back spasms).

"They're working very hard to get back as soon as possible," Vogel said, noting that they have resumed some on-court activities in practice.



AP

San Antonio Spurs' Victor Wembanyama pumps his fist after the team's win over the Phoenix Suns in an NBA basketball game in Phoenix, Tuesday, Oct. 31, 2023.

## KNICKS 109, CAVALIERS 91

**CLEVELAND** (AP)—Julius Randle had 19 points and 10 rebounds, Jalen Brunson scored 19 points and New York did not trail in the final three quarters of a victory over short-handed Cleveland.

Immanuel Quickley added 18 points off the bench and RJ Barrett had 16 in the teams' first meeting since New York eliminated Cleveland in five games in the first round of the 2023 playoffs.

Donovan Mitchell scored 26 points in 29 minutes, and Isaac Okoro and Georges Niang had 11 points apiece for the Cavaliers, who have lost three straight.

Isaiah Hartenstein had 13 points and seven rebounds, and Mitchell Robinson added eight points and seven boards for New York. Cavaliers undrafted rookie Craig Porter scored 10 points.

## CLIPPERS 118, MAGIC 102

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—Paul George scored 27 points, Russell Westbrook added 18 and Los Angeles beat Orlando as future teammate James Harden watched from a suite.

Harden could not be on the Clippers' bench because the trade bringing him to Los Angeles from the Philadelphia 76ers has not been finalized.

Bones Hyland and Norman Powell added 18 points apiece for the Clippers.

Paolo Banchero led Orlando with 15 points and Franz Wagner had 14 points and eight rebounds. Moritz Wagner scored 13 off the bench.

# Source: 76ers trade disgruntled guard Harden to Clippers

**CAMDEN, N.J.** (AP)—James Harden publicly called his boss a liar and swore he would never again play for the Philadelphia 76ers.

So he won't—the 10-time All-Star with a history of trade demands only slightly shorter than his signature beard is on the move to his fifth NBA team, chasing his first championship, this time in his native California.

Harden joins Kawhi Leonard, Paul George and Russell Westbrook to shape a core group of veterans trying to win the Los Angeles Clippers their first NBA title.

Even though the trade is not finalized, Harden arrived in Los Angeles before Tuesday's night's game against the Orlando Magic. He was greeted by owner Steve Ballmer when he arrived at Crypto.Com Arena and then met with his new teammates in the locker room. He hugged Russell Westbrook and Paul George upon seeing them. Harden's No. 1 blue jersey was ready and waiting for him at his locker.

When asked by a reporter if he was excited about coming to the Clippers, Harden said "you don't understand."

Clippers coach Tyronn Lue, who did his pregame availability 45 minutes before Harden's arrival, had no comment about the imminent deal.

The 76ers are simply trying to move on from the Harden Headache and continue their own long shot bid at a championship behind reigning NBA MVP Joel Embiid and star-in-waiting Tyrese Maxey.

The final haul was yet to be settled on Tuesday—coach Nick Nurse and Maxey danced around the topic of the trade following practice—but the key parts were this: the 76ers sent Harden, P.J. Tucker and Filip Petrušev to Los Angeles for Marcus Morris, Robert Covington, Nic Batum, K.J. Martin, a 2028 unprotected first-round draft pick, two second-round picks, a 2029 draft-pick swap and an additional first-rounder from a third team, a person familiar with the trade told The Associated Press.

The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because the final details of the trade were not yet official.

Maxey texted the 34-year-old Harden when word of the deal broke overnight—Nurse said he slept through the trade call—and thanked his former teammate for his contributions in 79 total regular-season games with the 76ers.

"I told him I loved him, told him I appreciated him," Maxey said. "One thing he really installed in me was confidence. I've always been a confident person. He made me be even more confident than I already was. All I can do is appreciate him for that."

Maxey turns 23 on Saturday and has improved his numbers in each of his first three seasons—8.5 points per game to 17.5 to 20.3 to 30.3 and his first Eastern Conference Player of the Week award in a small sample this season. That improvement has the 76ers finally believing he can be the star to pair with Embiid and remain contenders. Not Ben Simmons. Not Harden.

"Everything's been going well, the flow's been well, the organization's been great, the team believes, the coach believes in himself," Maxey said. "Everything's been great."

Still, the longer the Harden melodrama lingered in Philly, the greater the chance the situation would eventually implode. Harden—now traded by Houston, Brooklyn and the 76ers in each of the past three seasons—had long wanted to play in Philadelphia.

Harden and team president Daryl Morey, who was not available Tuesday for comment, were first allies when they were in Houston. Harden was a league MVP and had scoring titles for the Rockets. But when the Rockets went into a rebuild, Harden issued his first ultimatum and forced his way to Brooklyn in 2021. He joined Kevin Durant and Kyrie Irving in a "Big Three" that was never very big. The trio was socked by injuries and other controversies and played only 18 games together before Harden wanted out.

So it was off to Philly at the 2022 trade deadline in a deal for Simmons.

He was reunited with Morey and seemed comfortable in his role as a playmaker while the offense ran through Embiid. Harden even declined his $47.4 million option in June 2022, saying he wanted to give the 76ers financial flexibility to improve their roster and compete for a championship. He signed a below-market deal worth slightly more than $68 million, paying him about $33 million last season with a $35.6 million player option for this one.

Harden led the NBA in assists last season with 10.7 per game, but it was his 22 total points in Games 6 and 7 losses that doomed the Sixers when they lost to Boston in the second round of the playoffs.

Part of Harden's complaint with the Sixers stemmed from his belief he should have earned a long-term contract. When he didn't, Harden was determined to sever ties with the Sixers, and called he Morey a liar at an August promotional event in China.

"Daryl Morey is a liar and I will never be a part of an organization that he's a part of," Harden said at the event. "Let me say that again: Daryl Morey is a liar and I will never be a part of an organization that he's a part of."

While Eastern Conference powerhouses Boston and Milwaukee made bold pickups in the summer, the 76ers instead learned that Harden desired a trade to the Clippers.

He was a late arrival to training camp and continued to practice with the 76ers until he was told to stay home for the team's first two road games in the wake of the trade demand. The lone time he spoke at practice, Harden said that his fractured relationship with Morey could not be repaired—comparing it to a broken marriage. Nurse insisted Harden would not play until he met certain conditioning requirements. Harden wore street clothes and watched Sunday's home opener from the bench.

Harden had been scheduled to practice with the 76ers on Tuesday.

Instead, he was on his way to California.

The 76ers are off until Thursday's home game against Toronto. The Clippers play Tuesday night against Orlando. There was no immediate word when all the traded players would be available to their new teams.

"I'm not sitting here thinking it's a big relief," Nurse said. "These guys are focused. Other than spending a few minutes a day answering questions about it, or having a few meetings maybe that I wouldn't have about it, it really wasn't that cumbersome or bothersome or taxing for me."

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

# Iguel, Kaipat are 2023 BASA open MVPs

Lamarc Iguel and Byron Kaipat are the playoffs and regular season most valuable players, respectively, of the 2023 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association Open League.

In an awards ceremony after the best-of-three championship game between the Aimeliik Bat Boys and Just 4 Fun last Sunday at the Dandan Softball Field, the MVP awards and individual awards were given to the season's top players.

LEIGH GASES

Belau Amateur Softball Association League president Leo Bobai, left, poses with regular season MVP Byron Kaipat of No Excuse, second right, and BASA vice president McQueen Masaharu, right, during the awards ceremony of the 2023 BASA open slow pitch league at the Dan Dan Softball Field last Sunday.

Iguel was named the playoff MVP after he helped Aimeliik Bat Boys bounce back from their Game 1 loss and win the next two games of the championship round with five homers and 10 RBIs to clinch the softball title.

No Excuse's Kaipat, who was a pitcher and slugger, was named the regular season MVP as he led his team to a third-place spot of the season. Kaipat was also named the runs scored champion with a total of 32 and the home run champion with a total of 19.

The season's batting champions were shared by No Excuse's Kimo Angailen and Just 4 Fun's Tony Salas with their 30 for 38 at-bats for a .789 average.

The triples champion was Mamaaw's Jon Norita with four.

Kebruka's Mario Salas was the doubles champion with a total of seven.

Mamaaw's Ze Lifoifoi was the RBI champion with a total of 41.

For the pitching awards, Aimeliik Bat Boyz's Luis Iguel was the earned run average champion with a 7.411 ERA while Saipal's Dominic Hideo was the strike out champion with a total of 31.

The Sportsmanship Award went to No Choice.

Luis Iguel, who was the ERA pitching leader, was asked after the championships how they held off Just 4 Fun and he said, "We were just trying to get in their head and put pressure on them." He said Just 4 Fun came out swinging in the first game, "so they got us. But in the next couple games, we came back. We got our bats and defense going and we all worked together."

Before the awards ceremony BASA president Leo Bobai said, "I just want to recognize our main sponsor for the 2023 open league, MarPac. I also want to recognize Saipan Mayor [Ramon] "RB" Camacho. Thanks for the trash bins on the field every Sunday. And JoJo Attao for preparing the field every Sunday for the games. I also want to recognize our BASA officers and board members for their hard work throughout the season."

## UNDEFEATED

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first win against Legends.

A Plus' game against Blue Haus last week was rained-out and continued on Monday after late afternoon showers once again with 6.9 seconds left. A Plus won a close 56-54 after Blue Haus failed to tie it up and force overtime.

It was 55-54 in the continuation of their game on Monday, with A Plus' possession. Clint Albert was on the free throw line, hoping to take it all the way home. His first free throw missed and gave Blue Haus a chance to tie it up. Albert scored the last free throw to make it 56-54.

It was Blue Haus' possession. A throw across the court to Jay-R Barrios made it, but his Hail Mary layup attempt missed as time ran out and gave the win to A Plus.

Blue Haus proved a worthy adversary against A Plus as this wasn't the first time these two teams met on the big stage. They knew their way around each other hence the low and close score, but A Plus demolished them in the first quarter as they couldn't seem to find the basket, for a 15-5 lead.

Blue Haus went into overdrive in the second period led by back-to-back 3-pointers by Dan Chan and Junar Guiab, as well as fast-break drives that resulted in fouls on Barrios. A Plus was limited to just 9 points while Blue Haus went on an 18-point binge to get within a point, 23-24.

A Plus' ball handling and defense were their strong suit as Andrew Ashburn and DeShawn Reign put the pressure up with blocks and man-to-man defense on Blue Haus. Blue Haus tried to make a break for it and take the lead in the third quarter, but thanks to A Plus' high percentage from 3-point territory and Joel Javier's inside the paint supremacy, it garnered them a four-point, 46-42 lead.

In the end, Javier led A Plus with 18 markers, followed by Ashburn and Gino Libuw's 9 points each. Blue Haus' Barrios made 23 points, while Marlon De Dios collected 11, and Guiab scored 8.

**A Plus Team 56** – Javier 18, Ashburn 9, Libuw 9, Diaz 8, Reign 5, Wesley 4, Mendiola 2, Albert 1.

**Blue Haus 54** – Barrios 23, De Dios 11, Guiab 8, Atiogue 4, Santos 4, Chan 3, Talania 1.

**Scoring by quarters:** 15-5, 24-23, 46-42, 56-54.

LEIGH GASES

Blue Haus' Elmer Esdrelon goes for a jumper during their game against Legends in the masters division double-elimination semis of the the Inaugural SMEC-SMLEG Invitational Basketball Tournament 2023 at the Gualo Rai Basketball Court on Monday.

## THREE

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division, Francisco Moses from Tinian Elementary School was first with a time of 5:50; Grace Christian Elementary School's Beau Bauer was a few seconds behind with 5:54; and Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School's Orion Garde was third with 5:59.

Twelve-year-old Moses said after the championships, that the course was "easy," but the toughest part for him was the hills. He then thanked his coaches for accepting him into their cross country team.

LoVel Spaeth from Brilliant Star School topped the U12 ES girls division with a time of 5:52' second was SIS' Isla Grant at 6:20; and third was SIS' Neveah Arriola also at 6:20.

Nine-year-old Spaeth said, "it felt really nice and I really liked the course that we did." In the whole season, she said her favorite course was the Banzai Cliff course.

For U9 ES boys, SIS' Gabriel Walsh was the fastest with a time of 5:58; SIS' Ezra West was second at 6:06; and TES' Miran Tamang clocked in third at 6:16.

Kaylen Taflinger of SIS was first in the U9 ES girls division with a time of 6:11; SIS' Olivia Walsh was second with 6:59; and third was BSS' Claire Fehrenbacker at 7:05.

The middle school girls division was dominated by all SIS runners. First place was Adalee Taflinger at 10:23; Eliza Culp was second with a time of 12:01; and third was Faith Arriola at 12:12.

The MS boys division first place was Agape Christian School's Raffy Cai at 9:02; second was ACS' Daniel Yang with a time of 9:21; and third was Francisco M. Sablan Middle School's Frank Lumanlan who clocked in at 9:44.

Snyder then thanked the season's student runners. "Cross country really brings out the best in people and I have been overwhelmed with how strong and dedicated our young athletes have been." He also thanked their parents and coaches "for enabling them to participate in the best sport (at least in my opinion)."

He added, "The team from Run Saipan has given freely of its time to help our events come off smoothly and they deserve a resounding thank you. They also hosted one of our races and so deserve our gratitude along with [Northern Marianas Athletics], SIS, and KHS for hosting meets this year. Finally, a huge thank you to the NMA and PSS Athletics for giving up a lot of pre-dawn time to make the season successful. Without their support and organizational resources, cross country wouldn't be able to support the hundreds of athletes we host every year."

LEIGH GASES

U12 elementary school division winners, from left, gold medalist Francisco Moses from Tinian Elementary School; silver medalist Grace Christian Elementary School's Beau Bauer; gold medalist LoVel Spaeth from Brilliant Star School; silver medalist from SIS Isla Grant; and bronze medalist SIS' Neveah Arriola pose for a photo during the awards ceremony of the PSS/NMA All Schools Cross Country Championships at the Saipan Vegas Country Club last Saturday.

LEIGH GASES

Middle school division winners, front row from left, Saipan International School's silver medalist Eliza Culp; gold medalist Adalee Taflinger; and bronze medalist Faith Arriola. Back row from left, silver medalist from Agape Christian School, Daniel Yang; gold medalist Raffy Cai; and bronze medalist from Francisco M. Sablan Middle School, Frank Lumanlan.

## FIERCE

*From page 20*

Games, and we're looking forward to making an even bigger impact in the upcoming 2023 Pacific Games," said Mister, a former national player himself.

Logan and Johnson went undefeated in the pool play in last year's Pacific Mini Games to reach the semifinals where they downed Tuvalu to make it to the gold medal game. The NMI players then won the opening set in the finals against Vanuatu's Chillia James and Banga Stivano, 21-19, before dropping the last two, 10-21, 13-15. Despite the finals loss, Tyce said the team overachieved.

"I couldn't be prouder of our beach volleyball competitors, both men's and women's teams, who represented us at the Pacific Mini Games. I must say, NMI did an outstanding job hosting the Games. The beach volleyball venue was nothing short of sensational, with Somia Quan at the helm. It was like the icing on the cake to see our men's team clinching an exhilarating silver medal," the NMI coach said.

At the conclusion of their finals appearance in last year's Pacific Mini Games, both Logan and Johnson have expressed willingness to represent the NMI again and challenge the best in the region. As they return to the sand court for this year's Pacific Games, Logan and Johnson will join the men's field that includes the representatives of Australia, American Samoa, Cook Islands, New Caledonia, Wallis & Futuna, Kiribati, Palau, Tahiti, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and the defending champion Vanuatu

"We're eagerly anticipating the Pacific Games in 2023 in the Solomon Islands, and Andrew and Logan will be back in action. These two athletes have been putting in the hours, training rigorously, and even had the opportunity to compete together in various tournaments following their success at the PMG," Tyce said.

The NMI pair played in tournaments in Thailand, California, and Hawaii. For their final preparations for the Pacific Games, Logan and Johnson will be training together in Hawaii for a week before traveling to Honiara where the beach volleyball competition is scheduled from Nov. 28 to Dec. 2, 2023 at the Solomon Islands Football Federation's Academy. Preliminary schedule for the volleyball competitions has yet to be released, but teams in the men's division will have a pool play format with the participating squads divided into four groups.

Joining Johnson and the Misters in the 2023 Pacific Games is Northern Mariana Islands Volleyball Association president Chris Nelson, who will also serve as team manager. The NMIVA representatives are part of the more than 100 NMI athletes and officials participating in the 2023 Pacific Games that will run from Nov. 19 to Dec. 2, 2023. Team Marianas' participation in this year's Pacific Games is supported by the Joeten Daidai Foundation, Triple J, Crowne Plaza Resort, IT&E, IP&E, Tan Siu Lin Foundation, Mobil, Tan Holdings, and McDonald's. ***(PR)***

Semien, Seager push Rangers over D-backs for 3-1 World Series lead.

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Iguel, Kaipat are 2023 BASA open MVPs.

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## 2023 CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS

# Three-peat for Chavez; Miller tops boys

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

LEIGH GASES

High school division winners from left, silver medalist from Marianas High School, Takeru Jim; gold medalist Andrei Kaithlyn Chavez from Saipan International School; gold medalist from MHS Michael Miller; bronze medalist from Mount Carmel School Victor Nash Santos; and bronze medalist from Agape Christian School, Mary Zhu.

Although cross country is a team effort, individual runners were also put on the spotlight and awarded for being the fastest in their divisions—with Andrei Kaithlyn Chavez still the fastest in the high school girls division for a three-peat, while freshman Michael Miller topped the boys division after the PSS/NMA All Schools Cross Country 2023-2024 championships at the Saipan Country Club last Saturday.

Second to Chavez's 21:17 was Kagman High School's Pia Ngewakl who clocked in at 25:31; and third place went to Agape Christian School's Mary Zhu with a time of 30:20.

Miller's teammate Takeru Jim came in second to his 17:59 with a time of 18:24; and third was Mount Carmel School's Victor Nash Santos with a time of 18:26.

Chavez, a junior at Saipan International School, has topped the HS girls division all three years of her high school career.

She said she felt happy and humbled that she was able to win and defend her title. "I definitely had a hard time finishing the course because my legs were tight and hurting. It was a hard, slippery, and hilly course. I would say it's definitely one of the hardest courses because of the hills and it wasn't a flat course so I was able to push myself mentally and physically," she said of the Saipan Vegas Country Club championship course.

"I was leading the whole time so I just told myself to slowly beat the boys in front of me and get a good time. I was able to beat like three boys in front of me and I had a faster time this year," she said. "I would say I'm more matured and a better runner this season. This season I was more motivated and dedicated to win and push myself."

When asked if she will defend her title again next season and make it a four-peat, she said, "Hopefully I can get the four-peat next season because it's my senior year, but it's definitely going to take more hard work and dedication to achieve the goal."

She then thanked her coaches, teammates, and family, "for always pushing me and supporting me throughout the whole season."

Dr. Ron Snyder, SIS coach and headmaster, said of Chavez's performance, "As a newly returned All-Island Athlete at the Asia Pacific Invitational and the current 800m NMI record-holder, I would say she has an excellent chance of finishing high school with four cross country championship gold medals on her wall. She is an incredible athlete, dedicated to her teams and possessing a killer competitive streak that drives her forward." he added, "Kaithlyn has also developed incredibly as a team leader. She sets an example for her younger teammates and is a great captain along with senior Jack Lindon."

For Miller, a Marianas High School freshman, who was exhausted after the race and could barely speak, said that the course wasn't easy but that he liked it. "I love the competition. Just the idea of pushing to get first place—I like that," he said.

"This whole competition was a nice experience and I feel like going to Guam opened my eyes." he said. Both he and Chavez, along with 13 other high school runners, competed in the Asia Pacific Cross Country Championships in Guam last Oct. 20-21. He and Chavez were All-Island Athletes—the first time the CNMI had two in one year.

The 14-year-old Miller said with that experience there, he was "able to see the level of what the other countries are on… It's a really competitive environment there so it really opened my eyes and I want to bring that same environment to Saipan." He then thanked his parents, his coaches, and his teammates for their support.

His coach, Gabi Race, said this of his performance, "Michael is an amazing all-around athlete and we expected he would place at the top based on his times from middle school races. If he continues to train hard over the next few years, I think it's possible that he could break the CNMI record for the men's 5K."

In the U12 elementary school boys

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## Undefeated A Plus Team advances to masters finals

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

A Plus Team-Saipan Marine Corp. continued on their path to dominance as they've beaten every single one of their foes in the regular season/playoffs and is the first team to advance to the masters division finals of the Inaugural SMEC-SMLEG Invitational Basketball Tournament 2023.

The semis are a double-elimination format and A Plus hs now won two of their semis games against Blue Haus and JSN last Monday. A Plus is now awaiting the winner of the semis games of Blue Haus and JSN. Blue Haus and JSN need one more win after they both got their

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LEIGH GASES

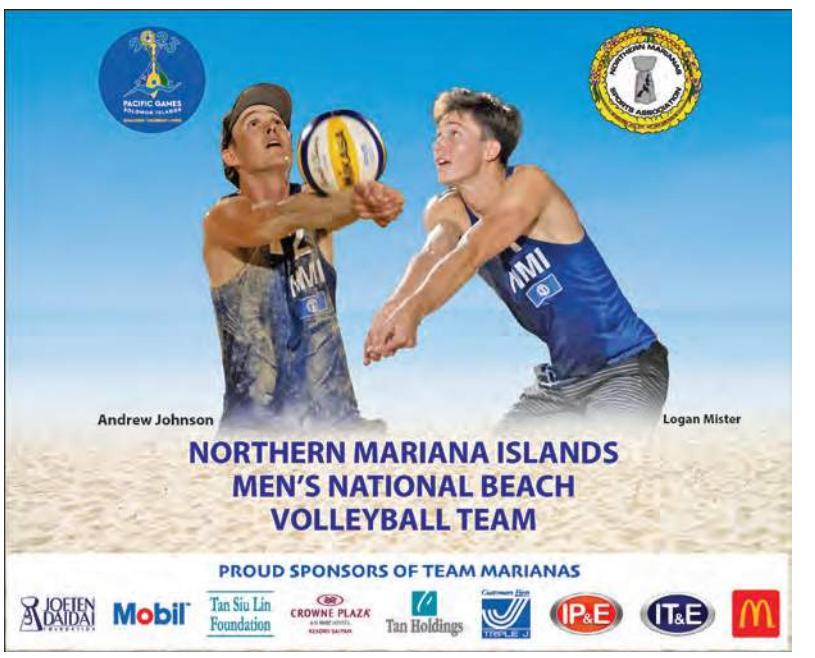
A Plus Team-Saipan Marine Corp. huddles together after their win against Blue Haus in the continuation of their rained-out game in the double-elimination semis of the masters division in the Inaugural SMEC-SMLEG Invitational Basketball Tournament 2023 at the Gualo Rai Basketball Court on Monday.

## Fierce competition in men's beach volleyball

With 17 teams entered in the men's beach volleyball event in the 2023 Pacific Games, coach Tyce Mister sees intense competition on the sand court in Honiara, the Solomon Islands.

"The competition is going to be fierce. The usual powerhouses will be present, and to add to the excitement, Team Australia will be joining the Games," said Mister, who is back as coach of the NMI men's beach volleyball team that will be represented anew by Logan Mister and Andrew Johnson.

The NMI duo won the silver medal in the 2022 Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games—a feat that Tyce said surprised last year's field.

"I believe many countries were taken by surprise by the impressive performance of the NMI Team at the Mini

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